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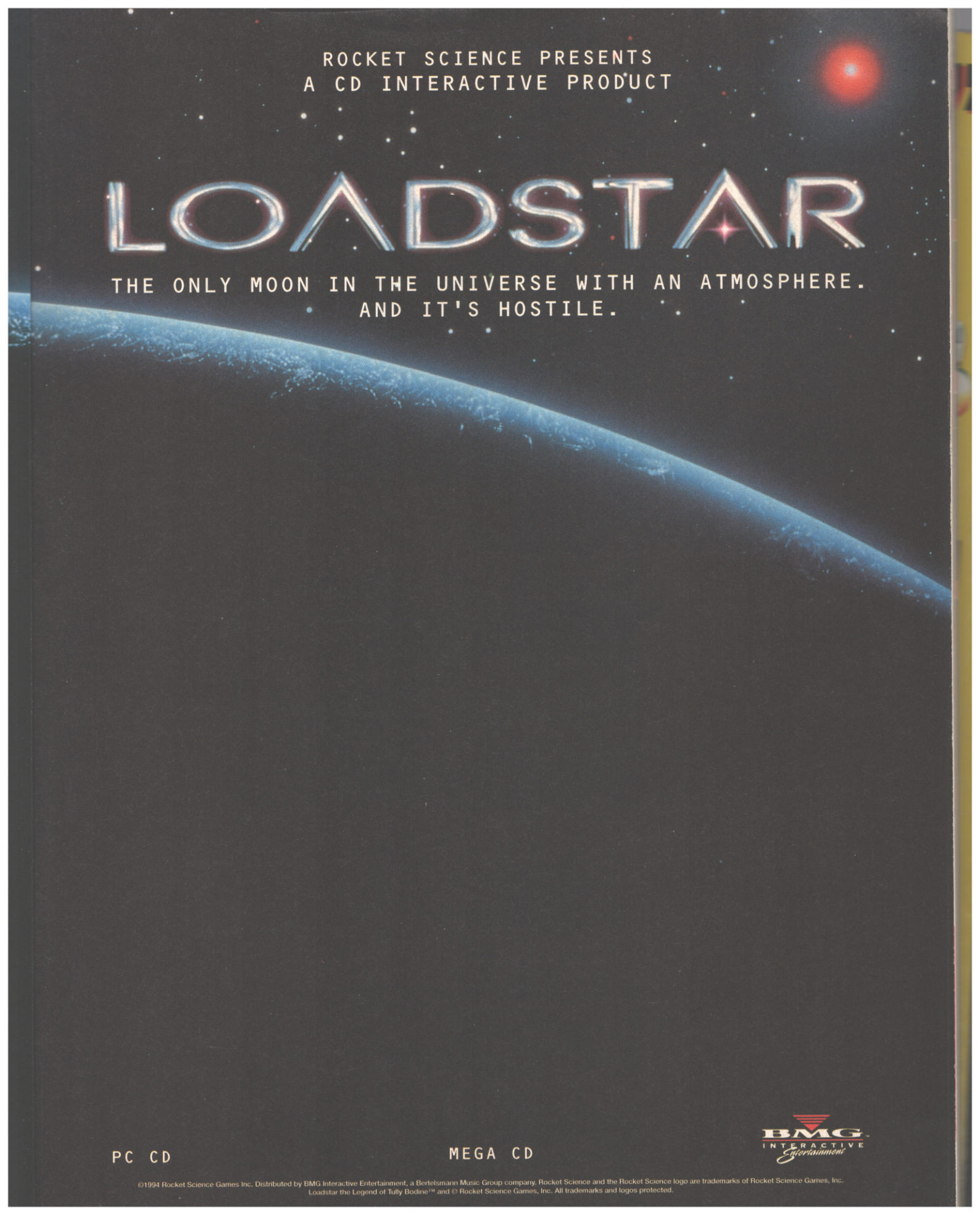

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MANAGING EDITOR:
STEVE JAMES
ASSOCIATE EDITOR:
MARK PATTERSON
DEPUTY EDITOR:
GARY LORD
ART EDITOR:
JULIE HEAP
DEPUTY ART EDITOR:
PETREA DOYLE
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RAD AUTOMATIC
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CONTRIBUTING WRITERS:
TONY DILLON
DEAN EVANS
STEVE MERRETT
RIK SKEWS
PAUL RAND
CAL JONES
ANGUS SWAN
COVER ILLUSTRATION:
SEBASTIAN QUIGLEY

Editorial enquiries:
071-972 6700
Advertising enquiries:
071-713 1983
Subscription and Back Issues enquiries (9.30–5.30 Mon–Fri):
0858 468888
CVG Headquarters: Priory Court, 30-32 Farringdon Lane, London EC1R 3AU TEL: 071-972 6700 FAX: 071-972 6701
ADVERTISING MANAGER:
Simon Hamer
ADVERTISING EXECUTIVE:
Holly Eadie
PRODUCTION: Tina Gynn
SYSTEMS AND PREPRESS MANAGER:
Sarah-Jane Leavey
MARKETING MANAGER:
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EDITORIAL DIRECTOR:
David Kelly
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iexclusivei

VIRTUA FIGHTER!

It's finally here – and CVG have it first! The first review anywhere of Saturn Virtua Fighters is contained exclusively within these pages.

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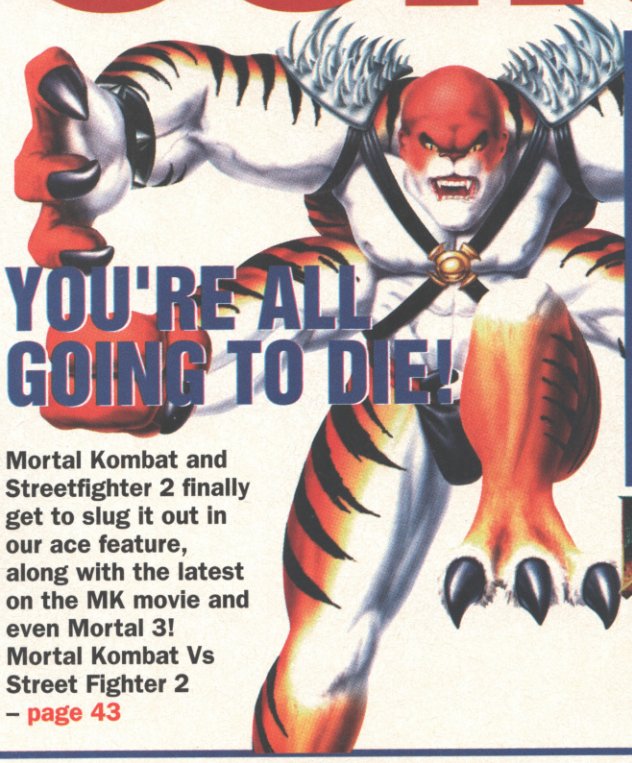

YOU'RE ALL GOING TO DIE!

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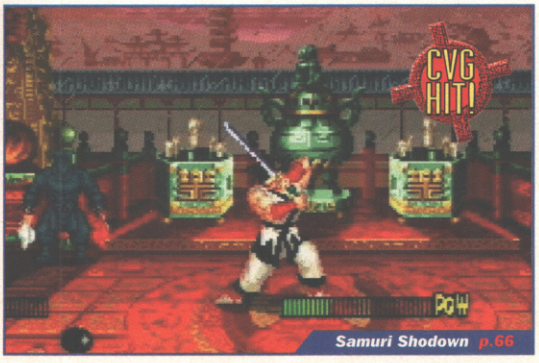

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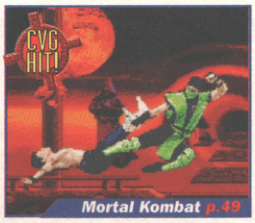

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YES, THIS IS THE FABULOUS £5,000 GIVEAWAY ISSUE...

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the wired-up gaming news section

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hell-for-leather to bring

Seedy CDs, shock, horror probe!

forward the launch of

PlayStation system software pics

the Ultra-64. In the

Super Streetfighter II for SNES

meantime it has just

Neo Geo cheap games deal!

launched the world's

SCURK to fans of Sim City 2000

first mass-market VR

Virtua Hydeide - new Sega game

toy – a 'virtual' version

BT postpone games channel

of the Game Boy...

Rocket Science doppleganger

NINTENDO LAUNCHES VR32

It's the 32-bit Game Boy and we've got it first!!

Nintendo unveiled its new hardware platform, the Virtual Boy (formerly known as VR32), at Tokyo's Shoshinkai trade show recently. The Virtual Boy is a RISC-based 32-BIT system which uses two high-res LED screens to produce the virtuality effect. The console also utilises a special double-handed controller to facilitate movement in keeping with realistic laws of spatial geometry.

The system is priced at $199 in the US, with software weighing in at a suspiciously low $50 and below. Sounds too good to be true? Well, if the unveiling ceremony is anything to go by, you could be right. Apparently the system doesn't really offer the true 3D freedom of existing arcade VR systems, and the graphics appear only in red on black (as you might expect using LED screens as opposed to LCD). Nintendo forecast sales of three million Virtual Boys and fourteen million VB carts within a year of launch (first machines hit Japanese shelves in April), but unless the finished software is of a far superior quality than that on display in Tokyo this seems a rather optimistic target.

NET SOME SAVINGS

More news for those with time on their hands is the latest from the International Internet Association. These Washington DC-based boffins are offering free access to over 8000 usenet groups, so long as you've got a modem and sufficient fundage to cover the US 'phone rates. Try calling the Hackensack, offices on 010 201 928 4009 for more information.

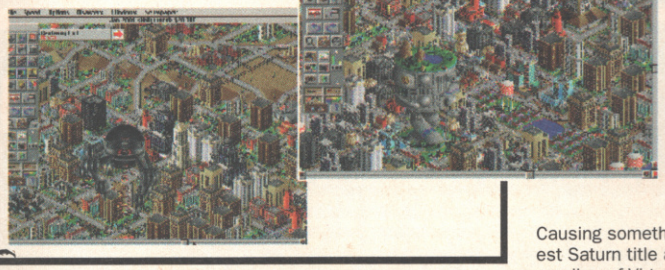
NEW 3DO BY APRIL

Goldstar has announced its launch plans for its version of the 3DO Multiplayer in the UK this April. Although the technical specifications of the machine are identical to the Panasonic console, Goldstar is allegedly trying to release it at a more competitive price. We can but hope.

Meanwhile the 3DO Company has reported world-wide sales in excess of 250,000. Compared to established formats this really is a drop in a very big ocean. However, for a relatively high-price console in an uncertain market the results must be viewed as very satisfying.

SIM MONEY SPIN

It's been a while since it debuted, but Sim City 2000 isn't finished yet. By the time you read this the A1200 and PC CD-ROM versions of the game should be on the shelves, with a Windows version to follow shortly. Also on its way is SCURK. It might sound to some like a comedy robot out of a dodgy Disney sci-fi flick, but to Sim aficionados everywhere they'll know it as the Sim City Urban Renewal Kit. This little gadget allows you to redesign all your sim-folks' lodgings. Satan city here we come!



COCKLES & MUSSELS HYDELIDE-0

Causing something of a stir over in Japan is the latest Saturn title announced by Sega. Going under the moniker of Virtua Hydelide it's a second-person exploration-type title with some amazing graphics – as you can see from our brilliant screenshots. Sadly, that's about all we know about it as yet, but you can rest assured we'll tell you everything else we find out about it in the coming months. This 'un could be highly special.

ET – 'PHONE FROM HOME

Sad hippies with nothing better to do with their time than hang around the Internet Cafe (or whatever it's called) might like to catch up with the real world like the rest of us with the latest innovation in electronic publishing – The Electronic Telegraph. Recently launched, The ET hits the cyber-future-universe every day Monday to Friday featuring news, sport, upper middle-class Tory opinions and all the usual stuff you'd normally have to pay money for (like lots of advertising and other people's opinions). Roll on Virtua Sunday Sport.

INTERACTIVE TV POSTPONED

Residents of the Colchester/Ipswich area will no doubt be gutted to hear that BTs plans for an interactive TV trial have been put back until next summer. Given that this is probably the only thing residents of the Colchester/Ipswich area have had to live for expect a spate of mass suicides around there pretty soon....

BUY YOUR NEO-GEO CD STUFF HERE

So, you liked our big feature on the Neo Geo CD, did you? Well in that case this tidbit of follow-up-style information is for ye. Planet Distribution of London has announced its new status as official SNK distributors, and has a pretty darned massive selection of Neo Geo CD titles for prices as ridiculously half-pinted as £29.99, although their latest big-name title, Samurai Shodown 2 is a rather heftier £54.99. Anyway, if you're interested in buying a Neo Geo CD or any compatible software call 071 537 3333 right now. NOW – you hear me?

Digital Pictures revealed its new CD line-up to the press at a swanky Hyde Park hotel this month. Company President Tom Zito displayed titles including beat 'em up Supreme Warrior, basketball game Slam City, shoot 'em up Corpse Killer and edutainment title Kids on Site. What separates these games from other titles of each genre is their reliance on FMV as opposed to computer-generated sprites. This range of "interactive movies" (as Digital Pictures like to call them) start hitting the Mega-CD in late November.

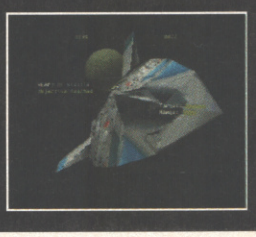
SPITTING IMAGES

You know, we were having a bit of a chinwag on the way back from the Digital Pictures press conference when it occured to us that there are certain... er, similarities between them and new pretenders Rocket Science (featured last issue). If you don't believe us, take a gander at the evidence below.

	DIGITAL PICTURES	ROCKET SCIENCE
Nice logo	Yes, they must have spent ages on it.	Yes, they must have spent ages on it.
You could put that on a hat	Already did – a nice fuzzy black one	Already did – a nice fuzzy cream one.
What's the company president like, then?	Tom Zito, a graduate of the NYU School of Film and Television with a lot of connections in the entertainment industry. Short bloke with a beard.	Ron Cobb, ex- film and TV heavyweight with a lot of connections in the industry. Still a short bloke with a beard..
And what's their "market strategy" and all that?	Reckon they'll revolutionise the videogames industry by combining cutting-edge patented technology with superlative gameplay.	Reckon they'll revolutionise the videogames industry by combining cutting-edge patented technology with superlative gameplay. That's novel.
So what about their first game?	Sewer Shark. Guide your craft through the first-person perspective tunnels shooting the various flying enemies who block your path – but don't take a wrong turning or it's curtains. Wasn't all that great.	Loadstar. Guide your train along first-person perspective rails shooting the various flying enemies block your path – but don't take a wrong turning or it's curtains. Not as much fun as Sewer Shark.

WINGING ONTO 3DO

3DO owners will soon be able to experience the visual impact of the once-Skywalker-now-video-thespian Mark Hamil in their living rooms, as EA bring Wing Commander 3 to their machine. We've only played a very early version, but it was already looking ace. Just see for yourself. Oh, and some of you might recognise Ms Ginger Lyn who also stars in the game. Shame on you if you do...



MORE SEEDY CDS FROM DIGITAL PICTURES

SILICA SLASH JAG PRICE

Hardware retail giant Silica has cut the price of the Jaguar down to just £199 until early in the New Year. It's hoped that this will encourage other retailers to do the same – potentially developing a unique entry-level market for the Jaguar as other new systems come in at double the price. In the meantime, Silica has also produced a Jaguar catalogue in conjunction with Atari. Call 081 309 1111 for a free copy.

SEGA IN CHARIDEEE "SHOCKER"

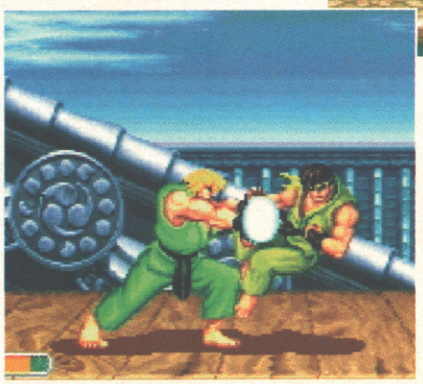
Sega has once again teamed up with the Royal Lifesaving Society to launch the Rookie Lifeguard Programme (and not, of course, to plug Ecco 2). Anyway, there's no pictures of pouting Baywatch nymphettes on surfboards this time, so we don't care.

PLAYSTATION READY FOR ACTION

"Next generation" aficionados will no doubt be interested in this shot from our new pal the PlayStation. Basically this showcases the system software which allows you to play music CDs and so on through your telly. PSX developers have also unveiled a remarkable-looking new title called Victory Zone – and we'll be printing some shots of it next ish for you to drool over. Keep reading CVG for information as it happens.

SUPER STREETFIGHTER 2 LAUNCHED FOR SNES

A recent fax full of irritating typographical mistakes from Future Zone also contained some interesting info for Super NES beat-'em-up fans with lots of money. It transpires that Future Zone has bought the exclusive rights to the sale of Super Streetfighter 2 in this country. If you think your console needs another version of SF2 but you're not sure where your nearest Future Zone stockist is call 0891 332288 for more details (average cost of a call is £1, so ask for permission if it's not your 'phone).



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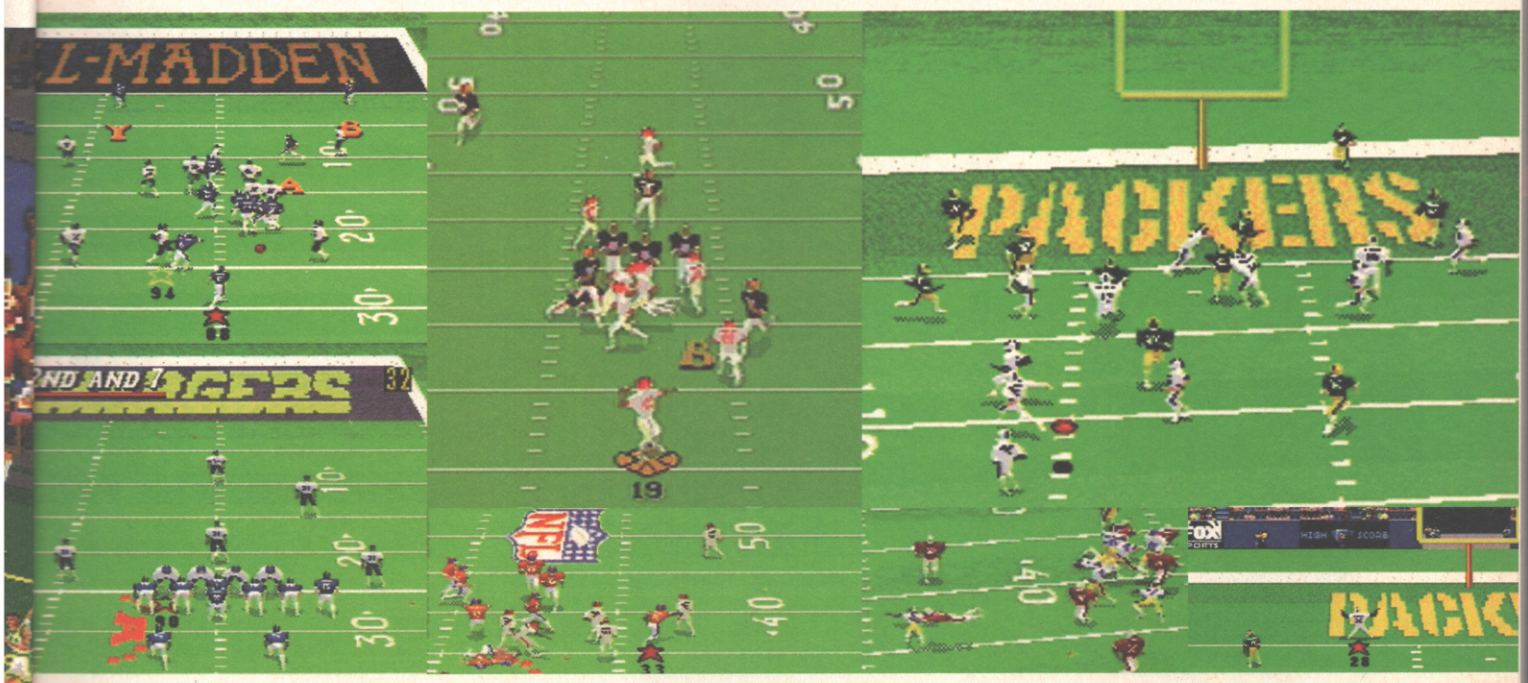
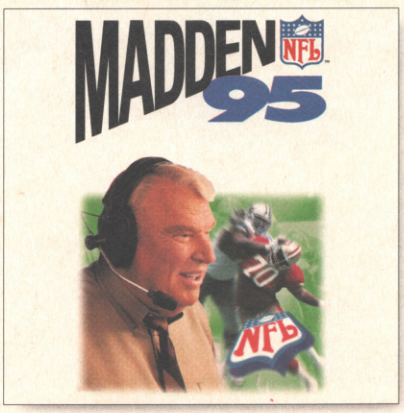


94%

"One of the very best sports games ever."

Gamesmaster Magazine, November '94



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■ SEGA SATURN

■ Beat-'em-up ■ Sega
■ £70-80 ■ Out on import only
■ No other versions available
■ No other versions planned

SEGA SATURN

VIRTUA FIGHTING CHALLENGE

iexclusivei

CVG HIT!

Finally Sega can say 'Welcome to the next level' – and mean it. Virtua Fighter manages to sum up in one game why there's such a buzz about the new systems. Well done Sega, there's a big bag of Quality Street winging its way in the post to you as we speak...

EXPLOSIVE

Apart from the its incredible vanishing polygon trick, the Saturn handles the pace of the game perfectly. ▼

AKIRA
Fast, strong and, ahem, rather deadly. His moves, however, are a bit, well, normal when compared to the other combatants.

FIGHTER

fighting in the third dimension

The last machine to generate so much interest in this office was the arrival of one of the first Famicoms in the UK, complete with Marioworld. But this really is something else. What Virtua Fighter represents is $15,000 worth of arcade kit reproduced almost blow-for-blow on an (eventually) affordable home machine. This isn't magazine propaganda designed to get you unnecessarily excited about a piece of new kit – the Saturn has fulfilled its potential, delivering a knock-out blow to the 16-bit gaming systems and sending people scurrying off to the bank to check their balance.

Virtua Fighter impresses without resorting to graphics streamed off a CD and without packing a disc full of cut-scenes you'll invariably skip past. It's a genuine example of the capabilities of this system. Something made all the more impressive as it bucks the trend of debut games on new systems turning out to be utter tosh, and was produced in a rush, with a deadline that was pulled forwards so the system would have a big-name title to be released with.

You're probably familiar with Virtua Fighter – the second offspring of Sega's recently formed AM2 development department (also check the review of VF 2 on pages 86/87). It combined cutting edge arcade technology with motion capture techniques and some excellent gameplay design. The result was a game that *wasn't* Street Fighter. People appreciated it and Virtua Fighter went on to become one of the most popular coin-ops of the year.

Obviously the graphics are a major draw for this game. No matter how many times we play Virtua Fighting on the new Saturn, we still can't quite get used to the realism of the moves or the smoothness of the 3D. But it isn't all visuals. Backing up the polygon protagonists is some great gameplay, with each fighter having his or her own particular style to master, which adds depth to the gameplay and hours of experimental button pushing as you try to work out the special attacks.

The Saturn may be too dear for most people while it's on import, but if you've been sitting on the proverbial fence waiting to see what the finished article was capable of, you'll be sorely tempted to part with the pounds when you see this.

RUCK 'N' ROLL

Time your attacks right and you can devastate an opponent in just two hits. A throw followed by a hefty stamp to the face is normally enough to knock the stuffing out of anyone. This is made all the better by the realistic movement of the characters, something which is made possible thanks to the use of motion-capture techniques. Here real people are filmed performing fighting moves, digitised, then points plotted on the joints and limbs and the results used to form the skeleton of the polygon-based characters. You really have to see it moving to appreciate just how good it really looks.

100%

GAMESMASTER MAGAZINE GAMEPLAY RATING

"...the most playable game in the world!" Overall Score - 97%

THE ORIGINAL

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SIMULTANEOUS 8-PLAYER TOURNAMENT

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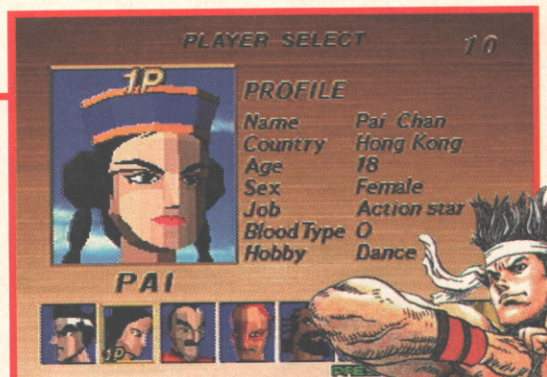
VIRTUA FIGHTER

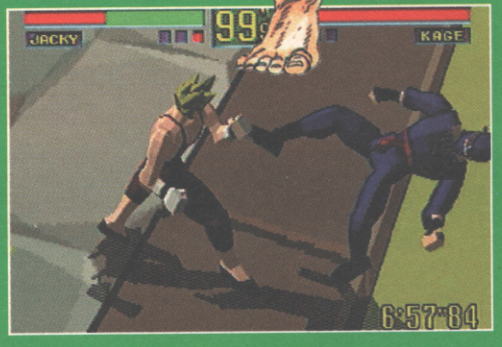


PAI

One of the fastest fighters in the game. Possesses a deadly kick which can knock her opponents right out of the ring.

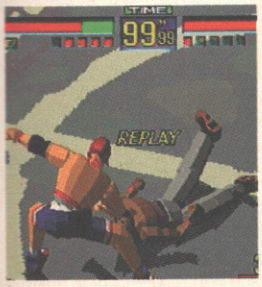
BUG HUNTER

The only minor imperfections in this otherwise flawless product are a few little graphics bugs. Sometime polygons vanish during the replays or the player graphics jump a little, but the actual gameplay parts are completely gremlin-free. Which is what really counts.



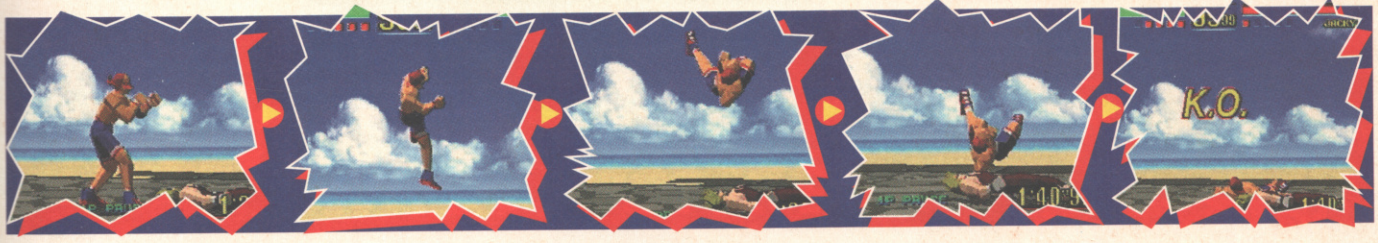
Also on the positive list is the disc accessing. There's a brief loading message when you start the game, but after the action is instantaneous. You can, however, hear the disc being accessed towards the end of a fight – presumably filling up any space left in the RAM buffer. All that and there's the full Virtua Fighter soundtrack reproduced in all its glory along with crystal-clear sampled sound effects.

Although the manual gives you a breakdown of some very basic special attacks, the rest are up to you to find. ▼



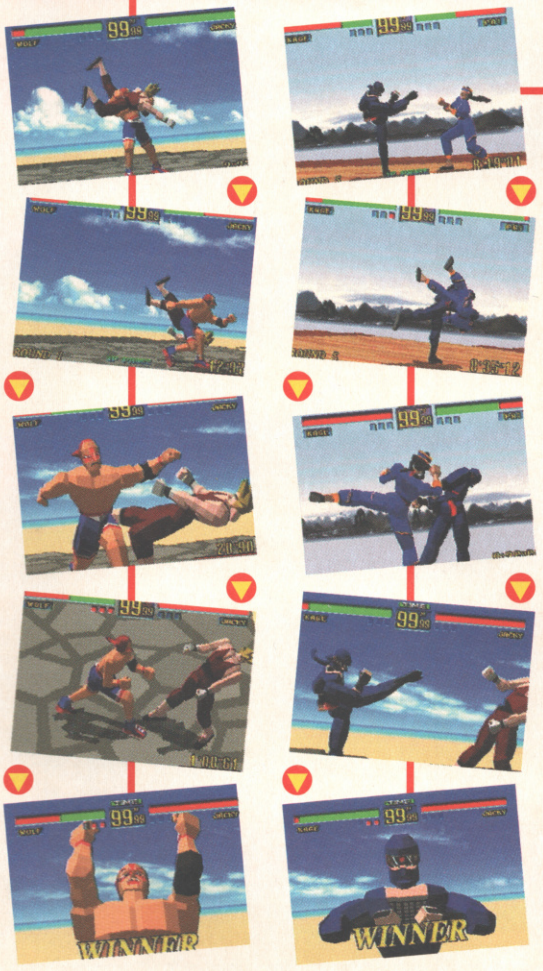
LAU

He might be old, but he's not ready for retirement. The fact that he's the penultimate character is testimony to that.

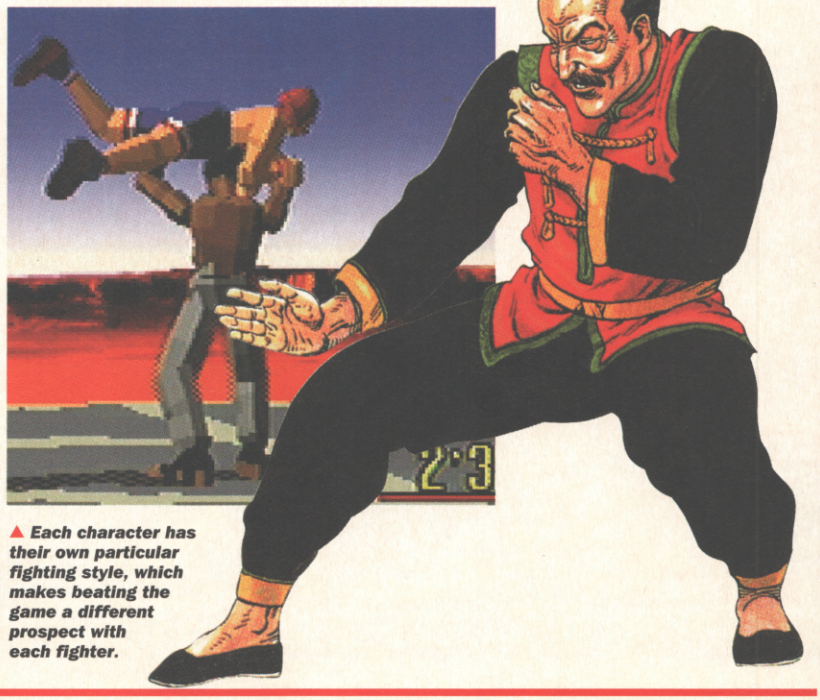


WOLF
Slow but massively strong. Has a vast array of killer throws which are very hard to avoid.

JEFFRY
Has a good mix of punches, kicks and throws, but they take quite a while to master. He's not that hot for combos either.



KAGE
His hidden moves are hard to find, but if you use Kage correctly you should be able to beat anyone with him.



▲ *Each character has their own particular fighting style, which makes beating the game a different prospect with each fighter.*

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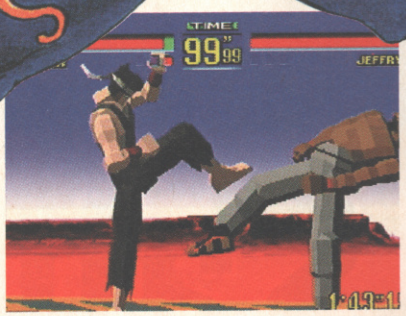
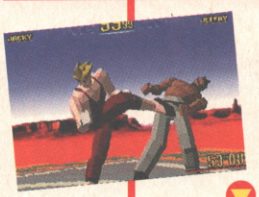
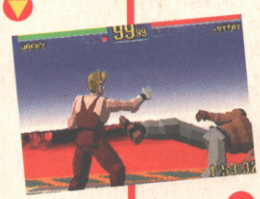


▲ *One thing you notice straight away is that the game is rock hard. Even when it's set to normal getting through the final character is tough – and when you're there you don't get any continues.*

SARAH
Shares several moves with Jacky, including that devastating neck, which is great for catching people off-guard with, we think you'll find.

JACKY
The most well-balanced character. Good for novices, despite the fact that he struggles in some of the later matches.





▲ *Despite feeling a little flimsy at first, the Saturn's joypad is extremely responsive – perfect for combos.*

TEAM VERDICT

STEVE JAMES

Everything about this game oozes class: the moves are superlative, the sound samples amazingly crisp, and the action is totally realistic. Guaranteed to satisfy even the most jaded of players. Well done Sega.

GARY LORD

Not since we had a Street Fighter coin-op in the office has a game generated so much interest; Virtua Fighter on Sega's new wonder machine has everything: graphics; gameplay and addictiveness – ad infinitum, but it'll cost ya!

RAD AUTOMATIC

Ooh crikey lordina, this is absolutely brilliant. It's as close to arcade perfect as you would believe and mightily playable with it. Obviously the work of some strange supernatural force. Virtua Fighting on Sega's new console is ace.

VERDICT

SEGA SATURN

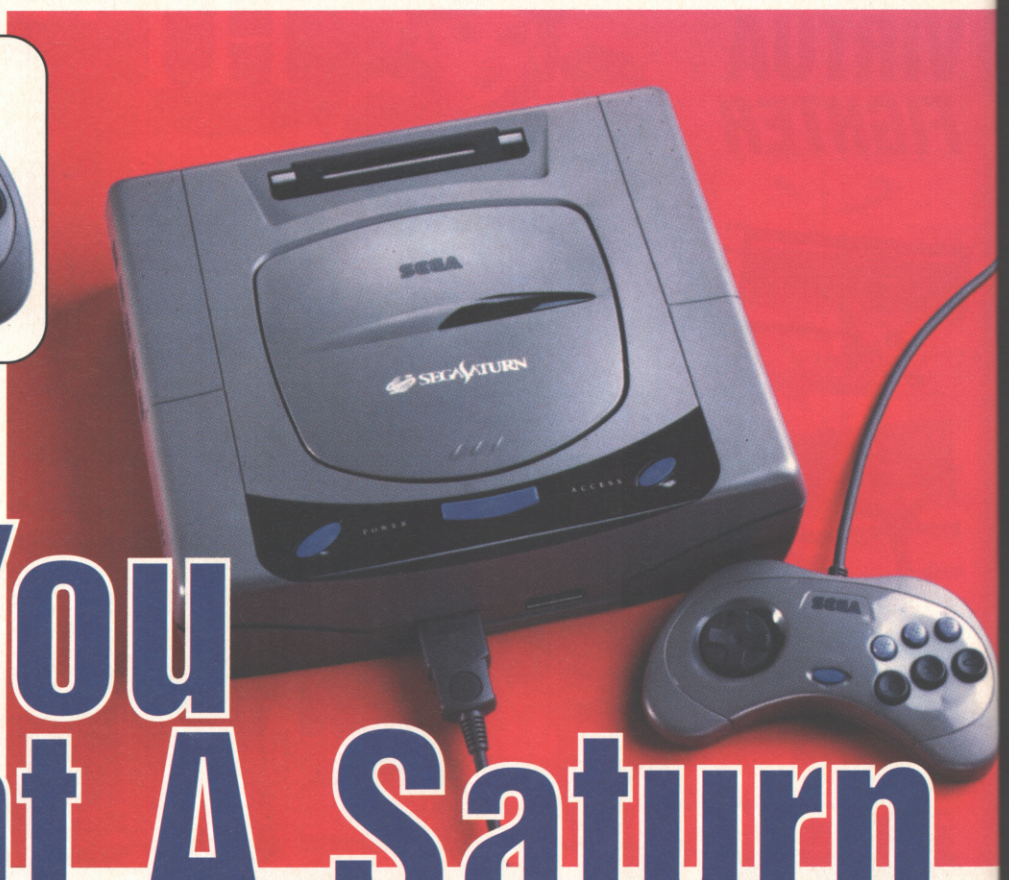
It's not often that I'm impressed these days, but Saturn Virtua Fighter has exceeded all my rather limited expectations. When you consider the feasibility of producing this conversion in such a short space of time, for a machine whose specs are constantly changing, and with Sega anxious to ensure everything's going to plan. So credit to Sega for producing an excellent machine, and even more to AM2 for its near-perfect conversion of this fantastic game. It's just a shame that it costs so much for the privilege of playing it.

MARK PATTERSON

GRAPHICS	96
SOUND	94
PLAYABILITY	95
VALUE	89

OVERALL

94



Already thinking about buying a Saturn? Well read this before you reach for the cheque book...

So You Want A Saturn

You've probably read the Virtua Fighter review by now and are drooling great globs of spit all over these pages we've worked so hard to create. But we understand, and that's because we have a Saturn, and you're probably thinking of buying one too.

Firstly, the machine is most definitely not compatible with the Mega Drive, although the cartridge slot could one day become the home of a converter should Sega feel the need. The access time from the CD seems very good, although as most of Virtua Fighter runs from RAM we'll reserve judgment on just how fast it is until we've seen a few more titles. However, there's still no news as to whether an import machine will be able to run official games. No doubt some clever bod will invent an import-busting device, but there's always a chance they won't...

We are very impressed with the machine as it stands, although like most things we'll have to wait and see what the future releases are like before we can make any predictions as to how well the machine will do. There's no doubt about its potential, though, it isn't just a souped-up 32X. The Saturn is one of the most impressive machines to debut in many years.

PAYING THE PRICE

The good news is that there's an option which switches the console's menus into English, however, that won't affect most games. Still, many of the first SNES titles were perfectly playable in Japanese.

The clincher when it comes to actually buying a Saturn is the price. You can expect to pay anything between £700-£800 for one at the moment, which is pretty hefty for a machine which costs £280 in Japan. Still, when it's released officially over here, what with the EU's wonderful import tax where they'll class the machine as a video recorder and whack a load on the price. We estimate it will retail for between £350 and £399 officially, unless Sega suddenly unveil plans to manufacture it in Europe – which is highly unlikely. If you definitely want to buy a machine contact Andrew Blumson on 0370 314255 who should be able to point you in the right direction (don't hassle him if you're not serious). Alternatively, try your hand in our Saturn compo on page 120 of this issue.

SEGA SATURN

The Saturn isn't compatible with Mega Drive joypads, so you'll have to make do with the eight-button affair that comes with the machine. Although it feels a little cheaply made, it's more responsive than the old Mega Drive pads and very comfortable to hold.

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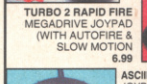

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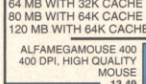

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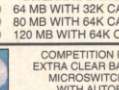

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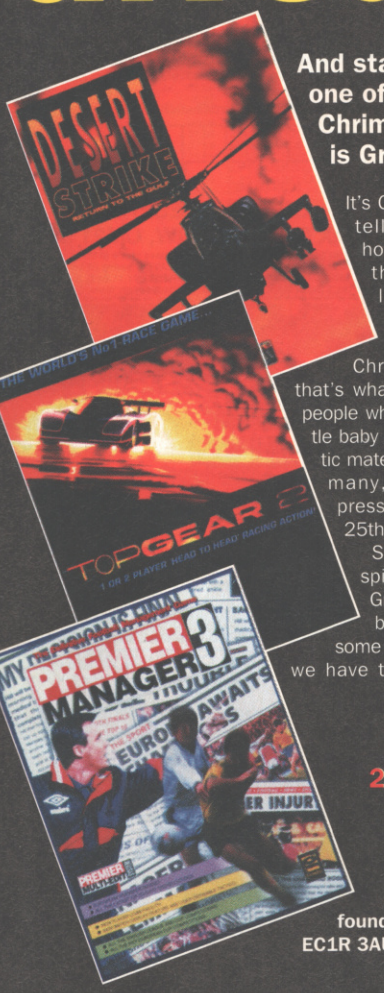
The Great Gremlin Christmas Giveaway

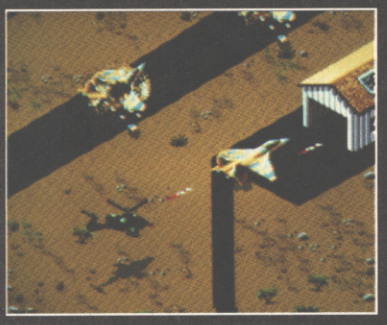


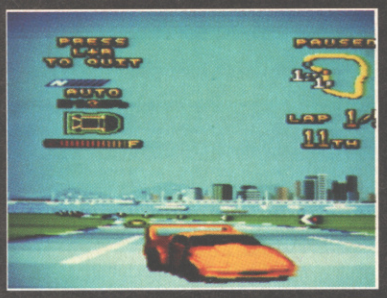
And starting us off in one of our many Chrimbo spesh compos is Gremlin...

It's Christmas, and how can we tell? Well all the software houses are getting together their biggest games to launch on a suspecting gaming public, because at the end of the day, what's Christmas about? Presents, that's what. I know there are some people who believe it's about the little baby Jesus, but for all us agnostic materialists it's about getting as many, and as expensive a pressie, as possible come the 25th.

So, entering into the true spirit of the yuletide season Gremlin is giving away (in a bid to draw attention to some of their top software, which we have to concur is really rather good) a cool, kickin' and bangin' piece of music hardware, that goes under the name of the formidable Sony Mini Hi-fi, and comprises a remote control CD, radio, twin cassette, graphic equaliser and has DBFB - which, for the technically challenged stands for Dynamic Bass Feedback and means that you can boost a low frequency range audio to provide deep, powerful bass through the two-way bass reflex speakers; translated this means that it sounds bloody brilliant, apparently.

If you don't manage to be the lucky winning git (not that we're bitter) then you could be one of the ten lucky-nonetheless runner-uppers. What they win is one of Gremlin Interactive's new titles, which go by the name of Premier Manager 3 (reviewed on page 82 of this issue) or Desert Strike on PC (excellent conversion of the Mega Drive stunner) or Top Gear 2 – the great CD32 driving game. And that, as they say, is it. Apart from answering the following quesies:





1. What's the name of Gremlin's new strategy game?

2. What other formats has Desert Strike been released on?

3. What do you want for Christmas?

All entries have to be in our office by January 20. Which can be found at the following address: CVG, 30-32 Farringdon Lane, London EC1R 3AU. And don't forget to address your entries The Gremlin Spirit of Christmas compo. Thank you and good night.

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WORK IN PROGRESS

■ 32X

■ £Unconfirmed
■ Shoot-'em-up
■ Sega

■ Programmed by Sega Japan ■ Initiated June '94 ■ 70% complete ■ Estimated release March '95 ■ Estimated cartridge size 24M-bits ■ No other versions planned ■ No other versions available

METAL HEAD

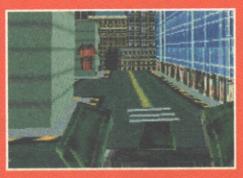
A Jap machine just isn't a Jap machine until it's got its very own giant robot game – and here comes one now...

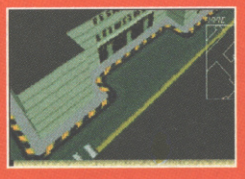
With the usual cheerfully apocalyptic look into the future, Metal Head is soon to burst guns-a-blazing on to the 32X scene. It's a shoot-'em-up which mixes tactical play with good old non-stop blasting. Controlling one of the large robots, the player is dropped into a 3D city that's crawling with enemy droids, planes and tanks, all of which are ready to attack. However, anyone expecting another Stars Wars Arcade style of blast are in for a surprise as Metal Head opts for the Virtua Racing route of multiple views which are used in conjunction with the most detailed 3D backdrops the Mega Drive has seen.

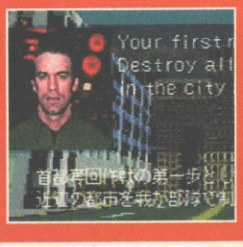
Using the D-pad to steer the lumbering robot, its many weapons are utilised using the A, B, C buttons to launch a variety of missiles, chain guns and anything else collected en route. Similarly, the game's four views can be switched at any time, allowing the player to see the action from within the robot, from under its chassis (honest!), as if sitting on its shoulders, and from afar — the latter being particularly useful when searching for targets.

As the level's dark alleyways and lit streets scroll past in incredible detail, a small heat-seeking scanner keeps you posted on the whereabouts of the enemy troops. Initially there aren't many, but the later stages see the addition of more robust droids and planes which fly along the streets strafing anything in their path. Metal Head is currently 70% complete and is lining up for a March release.

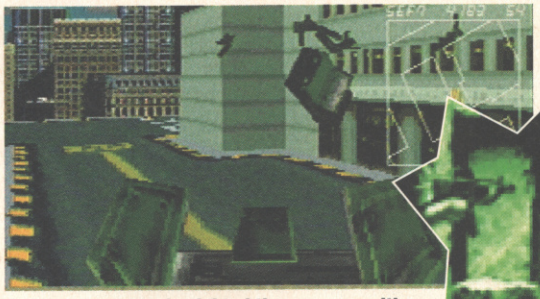
LOOK AT THE QUALITY OF THAT...







The most striking aspect of Metal Head is its 3D graphics. As the robots wander through each level's many streets and alleys, the backdrops are nothing short of spectacular. Each building is fully rendered with detailed brickwork and windows, whilst the alleys are covered in graffiti. Similarly, the enemy troops are equally detailed with huge robots guarding street corners and packs of jeeps driving around in convoy formation!



▲ Once the enemy's sighted then you can either sit there like a lame duck or blow it to pieces.

▼ No it's not set in a World War 2 bunker, it just resembles one we're afraid.

▲ Friend or foe? Put it this way he's not exactly C3PO.

▲ The 3D rendered locations look terrific.

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SUPER NINTENDO ENTERTAINMENT SYSTEM PAL VERSION

MEGA DRIVE

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WORK IN PROGRESS

■ MEGA DRIVE

■ £Unconfirmed
■ Racing
■ Electronic Arts

■ Programmed by EA ■ Initiated March 94
■ 95% complete ■ No other versions planned
■ No other versions available ■ Estimated release January 95

Rash more roads than you could ever possibly have dreamed of with this latest in the bike-bashing serial...

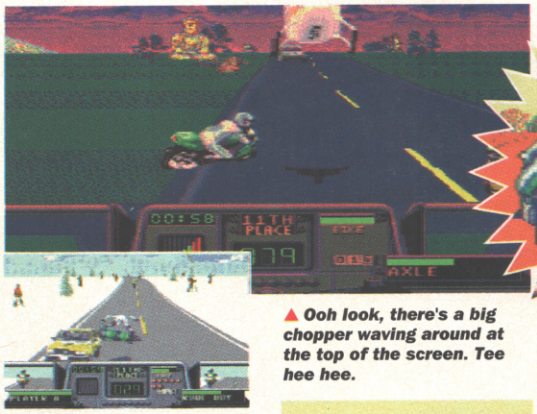
ROAD RASH 3

Electronic Arts, the software house with one of the best reputations for original game ideas in the industry, are set to return to the Mega Drive with this, the third in their series of Road Rash games, following hot on the heels of John Madden's Football '95 and NHLPA Hockey '95. In a style of play completely dissimilar to that found in previous Road Rash outings you play the part of a hardened street warrior out to thrash the pants off other hardened street warriors in an illegal cross-country street race. To help you in your quest for big bucks and the demise of your foes, you're able to lay your hands on all manner of extra weaponry to supplement the set of iron-hard evil fists which you use to knock rivals from their mounts at the beginning of the game. Oh all right, so far it sounds exactly like the first two Road Rash games, but it is a bit different, honest. For starters, there's a police helicopter which chases you around each course – and what courses you're chased around. Road Rash 3 spans the whole globe as opposed to the usual trans-Am run (although obviously locations aren't so expensive in games). Anyway, it should easily be as good as the last two games, and you'll be able to find out when we review it in a few weeks. Be there, true believers.

▲ *Warning – falling off fast moving motorcycles may cause pain. Don't try this at home, kids.*

WORLD PARTY

They say that travel broadens the mind. If that's true, it's no wonder bikers are the most "broad-minded" people around, happily convening at big bike fests loaded with dodgy rock bands and even dodgier "ladies". Anyway, cast your eyes over these wonderful pictures for a taster of just some of the exciting locations you can expect to pretend to visit in Road Rash 3.



▲ *Ooh look, there's a big chopper waving around at the top of the screen. Tee hee hee.*

▲ *That looks a bit nasty, doesn't it? That's as in painful, not as in crap, by the way. It looks dead good.*

▲ *Don't expect to find a bike shop like this near you – it's just pretend.*

▲ *Jeeps are an infinitely more sensible mode of transport when travelling through harsh desert environments, fact fans.*

▲ *In a touching display of affection, two kindred bikers reach out to each other on the road.*

▼ *Another thing to avoid trying at home, this.*

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AWESOME SOFTWARE

SOFTWARE UPDATE
AS OF MID-NOVEMBER '94

There are now more than 150 developers signed up to produce Jaguar software titles, with over 50 titles in progress. The following are the current titles, with Atari's release dates.

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Which computer(s), if any, do you own?

WORK IN PROGRESS

SNES

£Unconfirmed
Shoot-'em-up
THQ

Programmed by Sculptured Software Initiated April 94 90% complete Game Boy and Mega Drive versions planned No other versions available Estimated release January 94

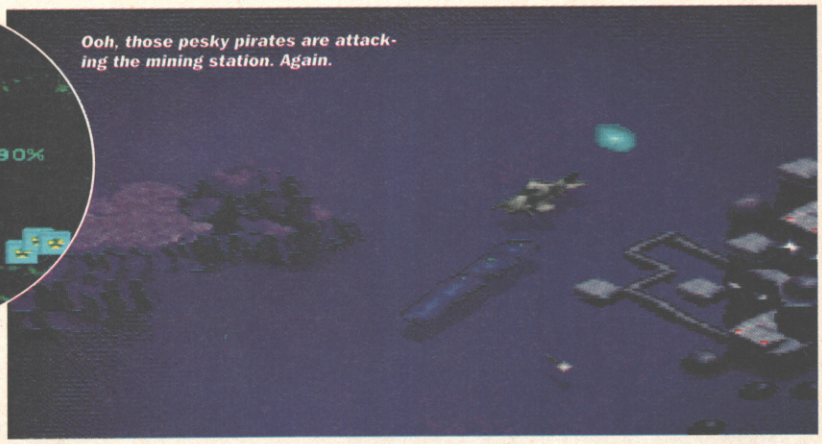
SEAQUEST DSV

Find out about DSV ASAP with our WIP...

When it first made an appearance on our screens, SeaQuest DSV was billed as a Star Trek for this generation; although the original Star Trek series featured wooden acting, ridiculous plots and some laughable special effects. Actually, thinking about it, perhaps SeaQuest and Star Trek do have something in common after all. That is to say it's about a dedicated self-sacrificing crew scouring uncharted depths for the benefit of mankind.

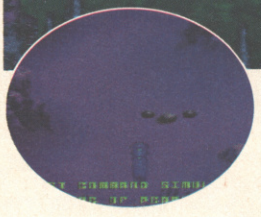
Something which the two serials also have in common is that SeaQuest DSV is now the basis for a new Super NES title, as is Star Trek with Interplay's Star Trek Academy. Anyway, the idea is you play a rookie recruit-type aspiring to the command of the SeaQuest DSV submarine and all the little mini-vehicles (a bit like in Thunderbirds) which are carried in the belly of said submersible. In order to get this far you first have to pass a number of test missions on the SeaQuest simulator and then rendezvous with the craft itself once you're accepted onto the crew. Now it's up to you to patrol the blue waters of the world promoting peace and harmony and all that over a lengthy series of sub-missions. And hey – let's be careful seeing what's out there.

▲ *Search the wreck of this old WW2 bomber for vital plutonium (which, of course, was the standard fuel for 'planes in the 1940s).*



Ooh, those pesky pirates are attacking the mining station. Again.

Nintendo owners jealous of Sega's Ecco the Dolphin should be mightily cheered up by this shot. ▶



▲ *Blast through the rocks to reach the trapped miners, oh sub operator!*

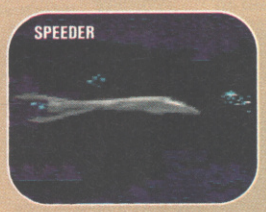
▲ *This lovely 3D map pinpoints the location of each missions as it arises.*

◀ *There's gold in them thar corals, and no mistaking. Collect as much of it as you can for extra dosh.*

FISHERMEN'S FRIENDS

The main sub isn't actually used for much more than getting from A to B and disposing of the odd pirate here and there. Most of the work is done by a variety of smaller vehicles, each with their own unique powers and abilities. Here's a few of them in action.

Winch picks up objects.



Fast and well-armed.

Highly manouevrable – good for path clearing

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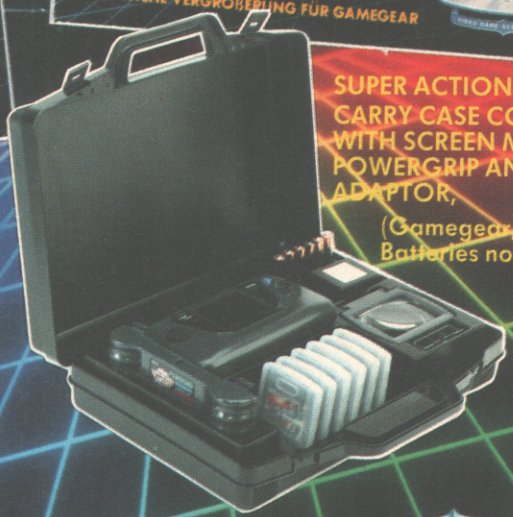
MEGA DRIVE CARRY CASE:
(Console and Games not included).



SUPER ACTION CASE:
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WORK IN PROGRESS

■ AMIGA

■ £Unconfirmed
■ Beat-'em-up
■ Millennium

■ Programmed by Millenium ■ Initiated January '94 ■ 80% complete ■ CD32 version planned ■ No other versions available ■ Estimated release January '95

MASTER AXE

He's hardly up there alongside Bruce Lee and Chuck Norris, but at least this martial artist and now computer game star is British, if that counts for anything...

▲ Meet Jim in the Gym. Jim is known as Giant Jim by his friends.

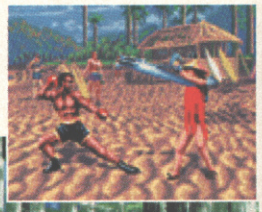
◀ Like a scene from Terminator 2, you can go one on one with a policeman in a steelworks.

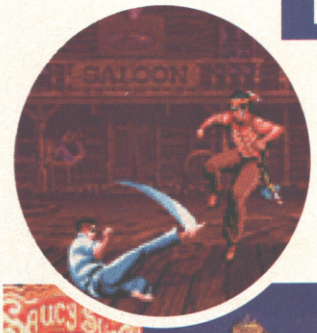
▲ If you want, you can play an armed character, but don't think that this will make much difference to the odds.

◀ As you are wandering around the United States looking for trouble, where else are you going to fight but in front of Mount Rushmore?

▲ If you could fight like Neil Axe, you'd probably end up in bar brawls too.

The Kick Boxer might look a bit conspicuous on the beach, but are you going to tell him? ▼





The Amiga has always been a bit of a novice when it comes to beat-'em-ups, with the passable Street Fighter 2 conversion and Team 17's Body Blows being the only ones of note to appear in the last couple of years. Millenium is trying to put paid to that at the moment though, with its newest licence, Neil Axe. Neil, one of this country's leading martial arts experts, is a Kung Fu teacher who believes in selling the art of discipline and skill over combat skills (yeah, right), and that is something that he is trying to reflect in this single player beat em up. You play Neil or one of three other fighters, each with a different combat skill, as they trudge around the US of A looking for the perfect fight.

Each new location brings a harder opponent, all of whom also have different combat skills (unarmed, armed, kickboxers and so on), and the fights are never fair. Millenium is very confident that this will rise head and shoulders above the full-on attack Street Fighters and will challenge the player to learn strategies and skills for each character, thereby introducing the discipline and skill elements.

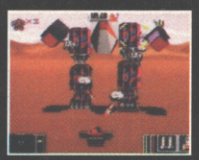
◀ Elvis was very into Kickboxing, apparently. Bet he couldn't do that in his jumpsuit and nappy, though.

I'm sure there's a pun about Neil Axe fighting in a wood, but I can't think what it could be. ▶

VORTEX

SUPER FX

A STORM'S COMING



VORTEX - 93%

"AN ESSENTIAL BUY" "SUPERLATIVE BLASTING ACTION INDEED" "BUY YOU FOOLS BUY" "YES, IT'S BETTER THAN STARWING"

NMS

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Which arcade conversion, officially licensed title or movie tie-in appealed to you the most in 1994?

BEST LICENSED CONSOLE GAME:

BEST ORIGINAL CONSOLE GAME
What was your favourite game of the year which DIDN'T rely on an official license?

BEST ORIGINAL CONSOLE GAME:

CONSOLE GAME OF THE YEAR
Think back... back! What was your absolute favourite game this year?

CONSOLE GAME OF THE YEAR:

HAND-HELD GAME OF THE YEAR
Hand-helds are quickly becoming a major force in the videogames market. Which game do you think was the best in 1994?

HAND-HELD GAME OF THE YEAR:

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One of our most prestigious awards. Which games producer do YOU think has maintained the greatest quality and produced the best games in 1994?

SOFTWARE HOUSE OF THE YEAR:

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BEST AD OF THE YEAR:

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Action games are the staple diet of most console games players. This category allows you to vote for the most original, quality game.

BEST ORIGINAL CONSOLE ACTION GAME:

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CONSOLE PROGRAMMER OF THE YEAR:

PRIZE DRAW FORM

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WORK IN PROGRESS

■ MEGA DRIVE 32X

■ £Unconfirmed
■ Beat-'em-up
■ Sega

■ Programmed by Sega ■ Initiated July ■ 95% complete ■ No other versions planned ■ No other versions available ■ Estimated release January

MEGA DRIVE 32X

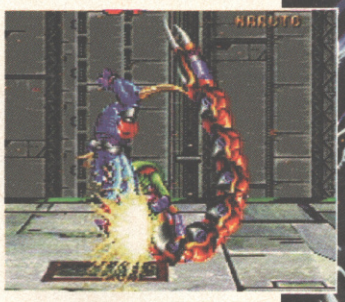
COSMIC CARNAGE

If you could trust a criminal not to rob your house or murder your wife, they'd probably be alright. But instead they're nothing but trouble...

Hanging's too good for 'em, that's what we reckon. They ought to be forced to participate in one-on-one gladiatorial combat on a crippled space hulk stranded in the depths of a barren galaxy. Quite a coincidence, really, when you think that this is in fact the plot for the very first 32X beat 'em up. The aim of the game is simple – beat everyone else to death until you are the only remaining candidate for the single remaining escape-bound shuttle.

Obviously, as is the norm in this sort of game these days, the powers and abilities (far beyond those of mortal men) of each character vary wildly. The four crooked characters are all pretty scary-looking primal hunks of alienhood whom you certainly wouldn't want to meet in a dark crawl-space. The heroes, on the other hand, look a little less deadly, despite their wide range of player-selectable power armour.

"It's got aliens, it's got gore, it's got funny joypad commands for all the special moves and, of course, it's got combos – but is Cosmic Carnage actually any good?" is probably round about what you're thinking right now, but as this is a preview you probably also know that we're going to say "See next month's issue for the full scam" in reply. So we won't bother.



▲ The special moves are all accompanied by these over-the-top special effects.

▲ Hmm, the loser here has been decapitated. That's a new trick, isn't it?

As you can no doubt see, the graphics are rather impressive, especially in spatial terms.

◀ That's a rather splendid effect, isn't it? Doesn't it look exciting?

You know, I once told Barry Jones at secondary school that they flavour raspberry jelly with blood, and he believed me. I wonder if he's got a job yet? ▼

SCALE OF THE CENTURY

Cosmic Carnage also takes advantage of the scaling powers of the 32X and as a result the view zooms in and out gradually, closing up into full detail when one character pulls off a gory grab attack. These two shots here demonstrate how the viewpoint moves in from reet far away to very close up indeed for added drama.

▲ Well, I wonder whose chances I fancy in this little meeting. Short bloke or huge, pointy, deadly alien?

▲ There's no escaping from blood, though it's strange how even aliens have red plasma coursing through their veins. Or gills.

● CONTACT SEGA (071-373 3000) FOR INFORMATION

WORK IN PROGRESS

MEGA DRIVE

£Unconfirmed
Platform
Sega

Programmed by Sega ■ Initiated July ■ 95% complete ■ No other versions planned ■ No other versions available ■ Estimated release January

RISTAR

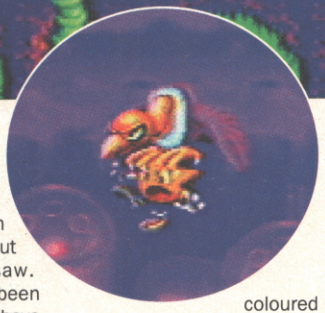
▲ Ristar makes use of his incredible arm-stretching abilities in this exciting shot.

The platform revival leaves the catwalk and heads straight for the glutted Mega Drive...

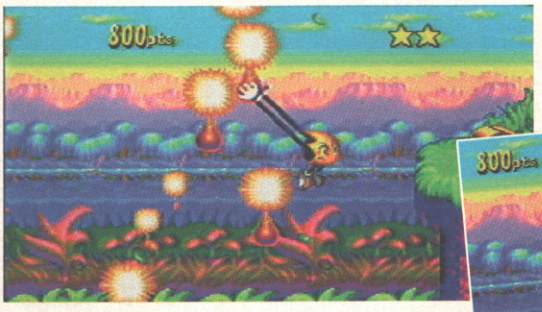
Hey hey – when Sega said it had a brand new platform *star* in the making, it certainly wasn't kidding gamers!!!?! Sorry about that, just slipped into lazy tack-journalism there. Anyway, that's spoilt the surprise for you. Ristar, as the second syllable of his name rightly suggests, is a star with arms and legs. That's original. Not like the programmers were sitting outside the pub on a balmy summer e'en trying to think of a way to make some cash, starring (literally in this case) into space for inspiration and making a game about the first thing they saw. Although it may have been the second. Smog may have be a little tricky to animate.

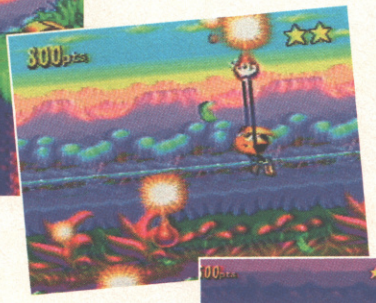
Anyway, Ristar strikes us as a sort of cross between Sonic and Dynamite Headdy, no bad thing considering the quality of both those titles. Risty bounces around brightly coloured platform environs using his stretchy arms and super grip to tackle the heights and crevasses of his habitat in some sort of quest, possibly for some jewels or something. Of course, you can never tell what these platform types are going to be like until you get a go, so we're firmly reserving our judgement until we get a decent crack at the blighter. You, on the other hand, need only wait for our full review of said product in four weeks' time to ascertain our opinion of its quality. Don't say we never do anything for you.

▲ So you think this looks like a million other platformers, do you? Yeah – so do we.



▲ One thing Sega certainly knows about is platform games with cute heroes, which is just as well for Ristar, don't you think?





▲ You can get through some levels almost without having to use your elastic appendages, but you'll miss a lot of bonuses.

▲ So, have you bought Sonic & Knuckles yet, then?

▲ Surf those platforms, little pentangular pal.

THAT STAR'S A NUTTER

Instead of bouncing on the heads of his foes to annihilate them, Ristar grabs the blighter in his hands and, on release of the attack button, nuts them squarely in the fizzog like a tanked-up Glaswegian. Is this the sort of example we should be setting our kids, eh?

You'll be surprised to learn Ristar doesn't jump on his enemies' heads to kill them. He grabs them in his hands and star-butts them. So now you know. ▶

● GAME BY SEGA ● CONTACT SEGA (071-373 3000) FOR INFORMATION

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WORK IN PROGRESS

■ PC CD-ROM

■ £Unconfirmed
■ Racing Game
■ Core Design

■ Programmed by Core Design ■ Initiated JAN '94 ■ 75% complete ■ Mega-CD version planned ■ No other versions available ■ Estimated release January

BC RACERS

▲ After a hard day at the office the employees of Dinos R Us skuttle off home.

Meet The Rocky Racers, they're a modern stone age racing family, but they're not from Bedrock, more like Mariokartsville...

What are PC players like, eh? They've suddenly all got in to business simulations (Pizza and Transport Tycoon to mention just two), I mean I thought that the idea of games on your PC was to help you switch off from all that daily grind, business malarkey. And what better way of switching off than to switch your spreadsheet for a prehistoric, wacky two-player 3D racing game, that has some stunning backdrops that scroll a full 360 degrees around your motor.

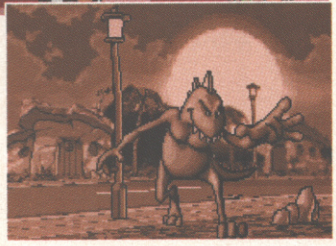
Core Design has come up with a Mario Kart-style game to the PC but with a Flintstone-esque prehistoric feel to it. There will be six bikes to choose from and 11 riders (and yes the nomenclator has played his comedy card here) with such rib ticklers as Granite Jackson, Brick Jagger and Gary Gritta; as you can imagine, we spent hours chuckling to ourselves over those. With eight types of terrain, 30 tracks and six different bikes, it looks like the PC is going to get a serious light-hearted racer instead of the usual hard-core sims at long last.

▲ Street Racer for the PC?

▲ If any whipper-snappers get in your way just give 'em a clout.

◀ OK, it does look a little like Bedrock.

▲ Watch out for roadside pieces of meat which act as power ups.



Well, I don't think this character was in my Big Book of Dinosaurs. ▶

RACE THE DINOSAUR

No racing game is complete ithese days unless it's got a plethora of different views to watch your competitors and the race from, and these dear readers are a few which grace BC Racers...

This is your common or garden behind the bike viewpoint...

Whereas this is what it all looks like above and behind the bike...

...which shouldn't be confused with high and behind the bike. The choice is yours!

● CONTACT CORE DESIGN (0332 297797) FOR INFORMATION

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SONY ELECTRONIC PUBLISHING

in the bag

After an intensive hunt through the wilds of our cleaner's Tardis-like cupboard we've finally managed to track down our missing letters section – being looked after by a tribe of nomadic Domestos bottles. So if you feel the need to disagree with anything we've said, what a software company's been up to, or just feel like a good rant at the expense of our print and paper. Write on...

LETTER OF THE MONTH
£20 PRIZE WINNER

SAME AS IT EVER WAS

I can't stand magazines who keep going on about how originality is now dead. Who cares about that when games like Mortal Kombat 2 are around? And if originality is dead, what have they got to say about games like Theme Park?

Of course there isn't much originality when every genre has thousands of different games. The future won't be much better, except for perhaps interactive movies. But what it will do is bring technically brilliant software, pixel-perfect digitised beat-'em-ups for example.

Just look at games like Mirage's beat-'em-up Rise Of The Robots (reviewed issue 156) and tell me that they don't look excellent. What you should be expecting from the future are near-perfect games, not totally original ones.

Danny Jones, Liverpool

So you'd be happy with a few more versions of Street Fighter 2, or perhaps Space Invaders arriving on PlayStation. With pixel-perfect graphics of course...

Write to: In The Bag, CVG, Priory Court, 30-32 Farringdon Lane, London, EC1R 3AU or E-Mail CVG.@emapimag,demon.co.uk...

Doom 2, 88%? What are you on? This is one of the best games ever written. It's got more levels that the first, is much tougher and the new shotgun and enemies round it off perfectly. You must be mental if you don't like it.

Frank Close, Peterborough

For extra Doom levels see wads, there are thousands available – with new monsters. If you want difficulty, try the nightmare mode. What you're getting, basically, is the same basic engine with a new shotgun. It's hard to justify the asking price when you consider those factors.

David Taylor, Cheltenham

DOOM LORDS

Doom was my all-time favourite game, and I love the follow-up, but I resent having to pay so much for it. Surely, as it uses the same engine and iD made its money on the original Doom, they didn't need to put the price up for Hell On Earth. It's not as if they had to spend ages programming it from scratch.

M Parsons, Hull

I've just spent a fortune buying Doom 2 – what a rip-off! I don't see how they can justify the extra price for something which is essentially the same game. There's no excuse for it. I've been taken for a mug. Still, the new shotgun is pretty cool...

Justin Aspinall, Berksz

OK, that's enough Doom knocking. It's a great game, but your criticisms are valid but imagine if you were paying cartridge prices? NHLPA series, the Madden series, oh dear...

NET BITES...

...Donkey Kong Country will prove once and for all the SNES rules, Adam Mitchell...E-Mail? You trendy gits, Dave Watson...Where's the PC Engine gone? It's one of the best consoles ever, Darren...

NEVER NETHERLANDS

Things are going seriously wrong in the world of consoles. With the new generation consoles just around the corner, most gamesplayers are probably saving up for one already. Sure, many of us will stick to our Segas and Nintendos. With so many new machines costing so much, it's no longer a case of just being able to own the top two. As such I really don't know which one to buy next. Sure, I want to play Daytona USA and Virtua Racing which are coming to the Saturn, but what about my other all-time favourite Ridge Racer? That looks like it's only coming out on PlayStation. So what am I to do? I should just pick up a left-over 2600 and play Pong until I drop...

Ryaco Hendriks, The Netherlands

DEVELOP AND SURVIVE

I can't believe how sad some people are. In issue 153 you printed a letter from Thomas Alan Murphy who reckoned that all the new machines would fall flat on their faces just because that's what happened to the Mega-CD.

The main problem the Mega-CD encountered was lack of software support. The Jaguar, on the other hand, has over 100 third party developers while the PlayStation has even more. Which should solve plenty of problems.

Richard Tipton, Hereford

CHEAP SHOT

How is it, that CD-based games cost almost as much as cartridge ones when CDs cost less to make?

Dean Govern, Leeds

Many CD games now use voice-overs and recorded music which pushes the development cost way up. Still, that's not always the case.

NO-LIFER

Have you noticed how people instantly presume you're immature if you play video games? I'm 16, have a healthy social life and enjoy sport, yet I'm terrified to mention I indulge in video games. Why is this? Personally I find them enjoyable, skillful, testing and a laugh. I enjoy them in the same way I enjoy films in that I want to know what happens next. Anyone else feel like this?

Retahd Power, Essex

BIG WET SLASH

I think computer gaming is heading in totally the wrong direction. At present there seem to be new computers/consoles coming out every few months. Some people may think this is a good thing. I don't. With so many machines around it's obvious that new software won't be released on every format, so you could spend a fortune on a new system and miss out on a lot of big name titles.

The other major point is price. With so many companies and machines out there, shouldn't they be undercutting each other? Let's hope that a manufacturer takes the lead in slashing prices and triggers a price war.

Elliot Vernon, Leicester

Under an EEC goods directive the new consoles have been re-classified as VCRs and will be subject to additional import tax; add to this the VAT, shipping costs and UK re-packaging which are imposed anyhow and it's unlikely that there'll be much room for a price war. You may be wrong on your other point: many developers see the new technologies as an opportunity to once again publish across formats. See our feature on page 123 this issue.

COMPO RESULTS

See if you're a jammy bleeder with our interesting competition results from the last few months...

WIN a CD-i

Issue 155

If your name is NILESH CHAMPANERI and you're from SOUTHALL, MIDDX you'd better prepare a space under your telly for the CD-i and games now on their way to you right now.

ACE 3DO COMPO

Issue 155

When it comes to people who've won a 3DO this month, EMMA SPARSHATT of SOUTHSEA, PORTSMOUTH is truly the only one who's got one from this magazine. Aren't you lucky?

WIN A MULTI-TAP

Issue 156

15 lucky dogs walk away with a lovely multi-tap for their SNES. And you are...: Lee Yalland, Newport, Gwent; Stephen Smith, Hertford, Herts; Kenneth Murray, Govan, Glasgow; Patrick Toporowski, Sutton-in-Ashfield, Notts; Peter Mather, Bury, Lancs; David Meadows, Torthorwald, Dumfriesshire; John Pearson, Chester-le-Street, Co Durham; Torin Parker, Powys, Wales; Fletcher Law, Catford, London; Daniel Ramsden, Tunbridge Wells, Kent; Jonathan Geddes, Glasgow; Michael O'Donnel, Kilrush, Co Clare; Gareth Comins, Banbury, Oxon; Stella Braley, Harwich, Essex; Heather McDonald, Ruislip, Middx.

Cheers to Ubi Soft for the multi-taps.

ALIEN VS PREDATOR PRODUCTION STILLS

Issue 156

And the single spawny get in this case is...

Martin Verkely, Aberystwyth, Dyfed

pads for Professionals

LETS GET TO WORK

LICENSED BY Nintendo

Super Advantage
(SNES)

8 direction oversize control stick. Extra long cord. Variable speed slow motion. Six super response fire buttons. Turbo speed adjustable fire. Hands-free auto turbo.

LICENSED BY Nintendo

Fighter Stick SN
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Fighter Stick MD-6
(Sega Megadrive/ Mega CD)

Adjustable turbo speed. Mode control button. 8 direction oversize control stick. Independent turbo control. Six button action. Hands-free auto turbo.

Ascii Pad MD-6
(Sega Megadrive/ Mega CD)

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LICENSED BY Nintendo

Ascii Pad SN
(SNES)

Hands-free auto turbo. Slow motion feature. Independent turbo control.

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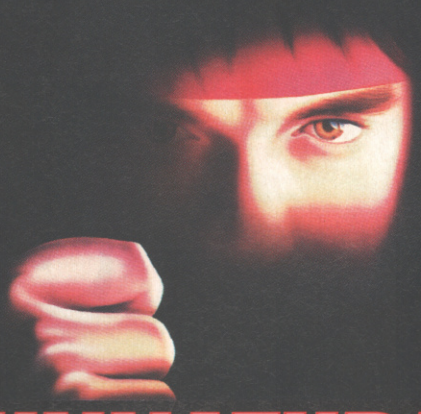
UNNATURAL BORN KILLERS

Super Street Fighter II Turbo X versus Mortal Kombat II

Steel yourself for the duel of the decade as CVG takes the trickiest of bulls by the horns in a do-or-die bid to find the best ever beat-'em-up

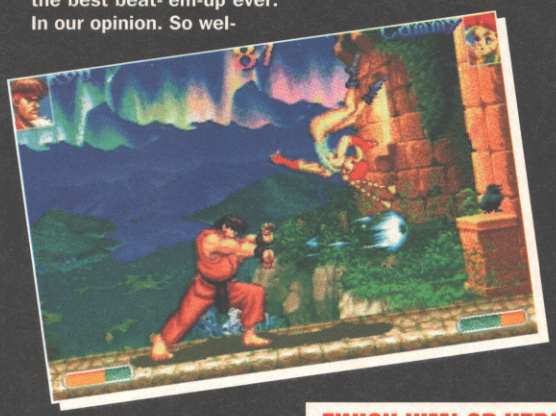


UNNATURAL BORN KILLERS

Street Fighter vs Mortal Kombat. It's the latter day equivalent of the old Tintin or Asterix conundrum, the United or City, Spiderman or Superman complex, if you will. The great clash of cultures which divides a generation. All attempts to resolve the situation have been doomed to failure, but now a glimmer of light appears at the end of the tunnel. Two new conversions of the latest models of each game are hitting the streets very soon, each one as near as dammit to the coin-op. Angling for a Nobel peace prize, we at CVG decided to put the two contenders head-to-head in a fight to the finish (fatalities and everything) to see, once and for all, which really is the best beat-'em-up ever. In our opinion. So welcome one and all to the 3DO Super Street Fighter II Turbo X Edition Vs Amiga Mortal Kombat II head-to-head showdown.

ATTACK THAT SQUIRREL JET!

It's all very well having loads of characters, but are they all well-rounded playing machines with loads of ace special moves? Well, the fighters on offer in Street Fighter are probably more well-rounded in their abilities with a few (like Cammy and Zangief) who are only really deadly in the hands of expert players. Mortal Kombat offers more obviously graded levels of character rockness, but the special moves are waaay more original and interesting. Both games make the deadlier moves harder to pull off than the weedy ones, although it's technically more difficult to fathom MK's strings of directional commands than the relatively fluid Street Fighter equivalents. Whether this is good depends on how much patience you have.



▲ *The moves in Mortal Kombat II are far more original...*

ROUND ONE – FIGHT!

Street Fighter grabs an early lead in the presentation stakes thanks to the faithfully converted coin-op attack sequence which trumps MK2's measly story text. Mortal Kombat's wide selection of 12 characters also pales in comparison to the enormous 16 offered by Street Fighter. And it's got a map, too.

FINISH HIM! OR HER!

These beat-'em-ups are all very well, but you have to admit it's possible to knock your opponent out with a feeble kick to the ankle in most of them. So do either of these big-name contenders allow the player to finish a bout of fisticuffs in a more realistic fashion, such as ripping their still-beating heart from their chest, or turning them into a baby? Well, both of them do, yes. However, Street Fighter's finishing moves require the player to have scored enough decent hits to fill a power meter at the bottom of the screen and are merely posh-looking versions of existing special moves. Mortal II, on the other hand, features rucks of gory fatalities, vaguely amusing babalities and tabloid-confounding friendships, if you can remember the techniques to perform them all. Mortal Kombat convincingly triumphs in this case, ripping Street Fighter's head off and urinating down the bleeding stump of its neck (like Goro would).

● CONTACT ACCLAIM (071 344) FOR INFO ON MORTAL KOMBAT AND PANASONIC (0344 862444) FOR SSF INFO

COMBOS

You can't move for 'em. Go to your local KFC and a menu of Meal Deal Combos stares you in the face. Work on a farm and it's likely you'll have to drive a combo harvester at some time.

And, of course, when conversing on the subject of beat-'em-ups, if you don't mention a five-hit handcuff re-dizzy combo you're obviously crap. Whilst the 'combo potential' of Mortal Kombat II is vastly improved over that of the original, fisticuff connoisseurs are all in agreement that you can't top Street Fighter II for linked attack strings. Heck, you're even awarded bonus points for some combos. Just to be a bit trainspottery about it, this is because characters freeze in the same spot for a split second when hit in Street Fighter, giving more scope for a swift follow-up than with Mortal Kombat, where punches often cause victims to fall over or slide backwards making them impossible to resmack. Part-timers obviously won't care about this, but serious gamestrels to whom the concept of an attack strategy seems pretty obvious should please take note.

BUT CAN YOU BE THE BOSSES?

Not as such in either title. The original four bosses from the first Street Fighter 2 edition can be selected from the title screen, but a new boss, Akuma Long awaits top-notch fighters. Shang Tsung, big cheese of Mortal Kombat I is now a player character (albeit a lot younger looking) in Mortal II, although there's no sign of Goro, but the game also features two new end-of-game adversaries – Kintaro and Shao Kahn (him out of the advert). It's possible to pull off a morphing-stylee Kintaro Fatality with Shang Tsung, but that's the closest you'll get to controlling the bleeders.

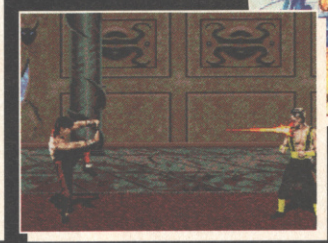
AND THE WINNER IS...

If there was ever a games-related question destined to cause major ructions throughout the office it has to be the old Street Fighter versus Mortal chestnut. Certainly there are positive and negative aspects of both titles which should be borne in mind. Street Fighter has more buttons and more combo potential, whereas Mortal is a more exciting escapist game with more variety between characters and a far superior atmosphere. Basically, if you've got a second player hanging around your house constantly, and the patience to sit there learning new tactics and attack patterns, the strategic precision of Street Fighter will appeal to you. If you're after a game which requires you to think on your feet a little more than unleashing a predetermined flurry of blows, Mortal Kombat II should tickle your plumcake. Us? Well, in our opinion the wide variety of moves and secrets gives Mortal Kombat way more longevity as a one-player game and the less anorak-esque atmosphere of the game makes it a more enjoyable two-player game too. If you disagree, as some rabid Street Fighters obviously will, we'll welcome any rational, constructive arguments from anyone. You probably won't change our minds though, but why not let us know anyway (Send your letters to CVG, Priory Court, 30-32 Farringdon Lane, London EC1R 3AU – Ed).

LOOK TO LA LUNA

I've got a secret, as Madonna sang oh so recently – but have either of these games? Well, Street Fighter makes its first tentative foray into the world of hidden elements with the appearance of Akuma Long. However, Mortal Kombat easily triumphs in this category thanks to having three secret enemy fighters. We're not sure as yet whether the programmers' cheat modes have been carried over to the Amiga version, but we reckon they probably have. And that's obviously very secret.

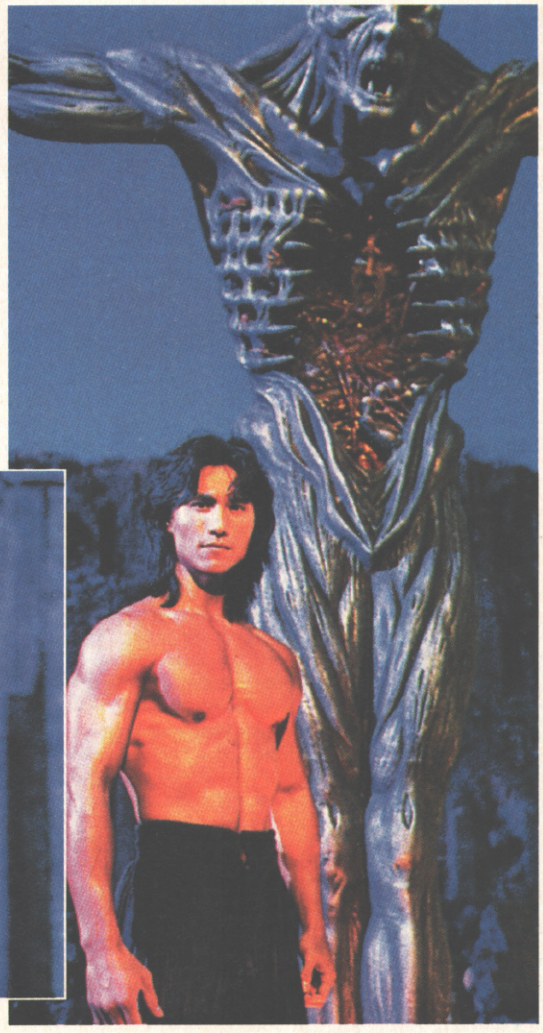
▼ *If you think this is good, wait until you see it on the PC – it could be the best yet.*



▲ *Ken vs Ken, flaming Dragon Punches and all. Watch out for his new attacks as well.*

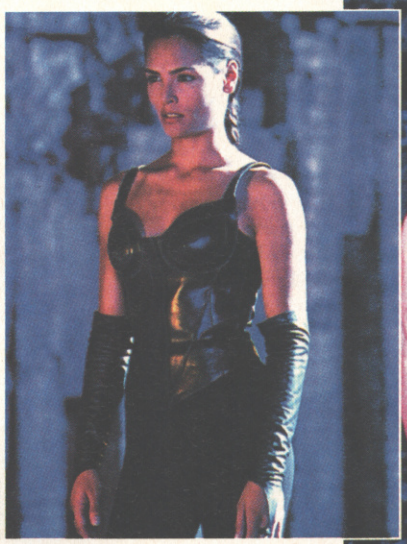
UNNATURAL BORN KILLERS

movie kombat



"The battle of the beat-'em-ups is being taken out of the arcades and on to the cinema screens". Remember that phrase, because everyone'll be saying it in a couple of months, except possibly Barry Norman. Anyway, it's true though as both the Street Fighter and Mortal Kombat movies are currently in (post-)production and due for release just a little too close together for comfort. However, everyone's seen the publicity shots of Street Fighter, so we thought we'd unveil the first pics of the Mortal movie.

As you can see, it's a rather dark and scary-looking translation of the admittedly dark and scary game, in complete contrast to the bright colours and friendly-looking settings of Street Fighter. No big names on the credits either; unless you're a hard-core martial arts fan or you've seen Shopping, from British director Paul Anderson who's at the helm of the MK flick. Goro fans will be pleased to hear that everyone's favourite four-armed half-dragon makes a welcome return to the series in the movie, thanks to the magic of stop-motion. Mr Anderson reckons the Mortal film will inspire the same feelings in the same people as the game, so expect loads of right-wing grandads harping on about it being the work of the devil while lots of normal, well-adjusted people who can cope with real life thoroughly enjoy it.



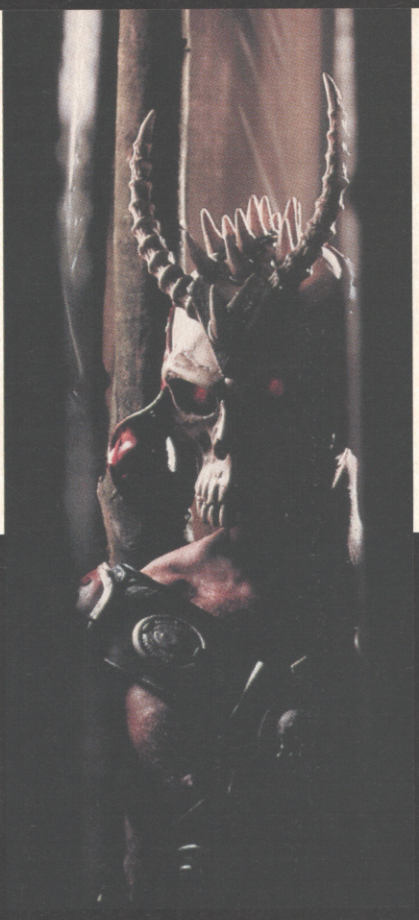
NEW LINE

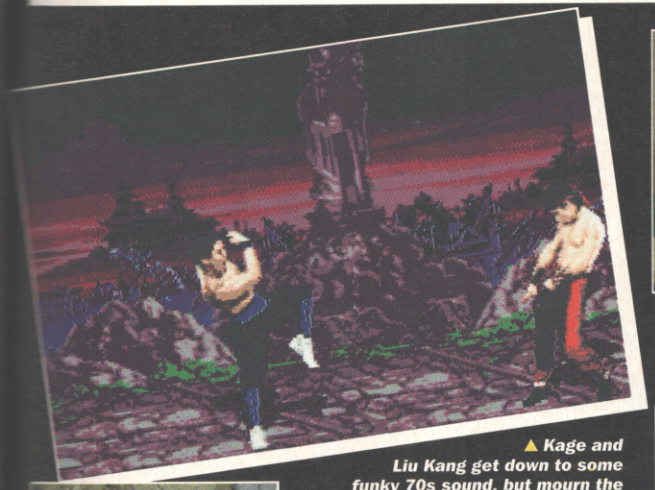
▲ *Bruce Lee lives! Well, he doesn't really. But if he did we'd be sure he'd appreciate the latest advances in headache cures and those handy little warnings they now put on bottles of paracetamol.*

the politically correct mortal kombat

Obsessive Mortal Kombat fans should be delighted to hear that a PC version of the sequel is on its way. And, just to clarify the point for any Americans reading, this doesn't mean they've taken all the gore and violence out to make it Politically Correct, it means that the game is being converted for Personal Computers.

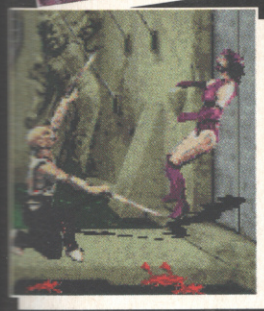
Apparently, according to our US sources at Bally Midway, the PC version is the closest yet to the coin-op. As you can see from these fantastic screenshots, there's practically no difference between the graphics on the PC and those found on the arcade machine. And it's not just the stills either – the animation is as fluid as any player could hope for. We don't want to give too much away right now because it's still not finished, so there's time for them to botch it up. However, let's just say that at the moment we're very much looking forward to getting this one in for review.





▲ *Kage and Liu Kang get down to some funky 70s sound, but mourn the passing of flares.*

▲ *Watch out, mate you've got loads of red stuff coming out of your hat. Up there, see it?*



▲ *No, really, it was that big or my name is Shiggertons.*

there can be only three

It's strange when you think about it, but the Mortal Kombat series is about five years younger than the Street Fighter line, yet work has already commenced on the production of Mortal Kombat III, while SF would appear to be stuck in the 'difficult' second game slot. We talked to our mole at Bally Midway in the States about how production is going to date and, in his awed words, "Mortal III is to Mortal II what Mortal II was to Mortal I." Kano, Sonya and – fanfare please – Goro, game villain of the decade, all make a return after something of a makeover. Smoke and pals are back too, but this time as player-controlled characters and not secret hidden ones (shades of Reptile here). We'll be pestering the development team to tell us more as the game takes shape, so keep reading for more up-to-date info as and when we get it.

■ 3DO

■ Beat-'em-up ■ Panasonic
■ £44.99 ■ Out Now
■ Prequels available on all formats
■ No other versions planned

UNNATURAL BORN KILLERS

super street fighter II turbo X

Calling out around the world, are you ready for a brand new beat, winter's here and the time is right for fighting in the street, as Mick Jagger put it.

Street Fighter or to give this version its full name Super Streetfighter 2 Turbo X The Grandmaster Challenge – one of the biggest games ever in the entire world, has finally wended its weary way to the 3DO. Some would say that this seals the 3DO's status as a real contender in the next generation supremacy battle, but let's not forget even the Sinclair Spectrum has a Streetfighter 2 conversion.

This conversion, though, is somewhat more advanced than the 8-bit tape-loading spectacular. For a kick-off it features the full cast of characters, all of them player selectable (except Akuma Long), including the four 'new' combatants Cammy, Dee Jay, T Hawk and Fei Long.

The basics of SF2 are now ingrained on the conciousness of anyone who's ever even looked at a home games machine. Take your lone fighter up against a variety of ugly-looking foreigners and paste them with your three strengths of punch, three strengths of kick and variety of special moves accessed by a string of joystick commands. Once you've mastered this you move into combo-type territory and it all gets rather serious.

All you really need to know is that this is easily one of the best games to hit the 3DO and it's one you should buy just as soon as you possibly can.

England's come on a bit since we last looked.

▲ *Cammy and Chun-Li have their own little slap fight.*

▲ *A good combo whacks up your power bar, letting you produce bonus-earning killer special moves*

TAKE THAT, YE VARLET

Super Street Fighter has more to it than just four new characters. Every combatant has been souped-up and evened-out to reduce the unfair advantage some characters (such as Ken and Ryu) have. There's also new animations and new standard attacks. Check out Chun-Li's new knicker-revealing heavy kick in this shot if you really don't believe us.

VERDICT

3DO

Pre-empting Capcom's highly likely follow-up to the current arcade model of Super SF2 Turbo those wily 3DO folks have come up with a conversion which they reckon tops the coin-op. As indeed do we. The game shifts faster than the arcade machine in top whack and features all the new moves, characters and features not present in other home Street Fighter conversions. Basically, as if you couldn't guess, this is absolutely firkin' brilliant. If you've got a 3DO you've got to have this, it's as simple as that.

RAD AUTOMATIC

GRAPHICS	94
SOUND	94
PLAYABILITY	96
VALUE	93

OVERALL

94

AMIGA 1200

Beat-'em-up ■ **Acclaim**

£Unconfirmed ■ **Out Now**

■ SNES, Mega Drive, Game Gear, Master System and game Boy versions available

■ PC and Mega Drive 32X versions planned

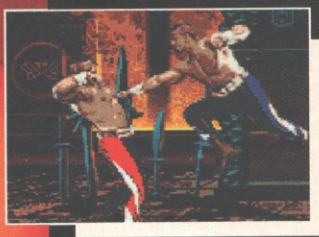
CVG GOLD

Prepare yourself! Finish him! Aiee, help, I'm too young to die! All these phrases are associated with one game – Mortal Kombat II...

mortal kombat II

▲ *Not like that, you fool, rip his flippin' head off. It makes a better screen shot.*

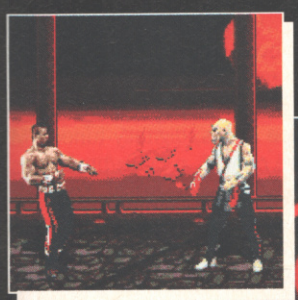
▲ *Guess who'll be singing castrato after this fight. If they've still got a head.*



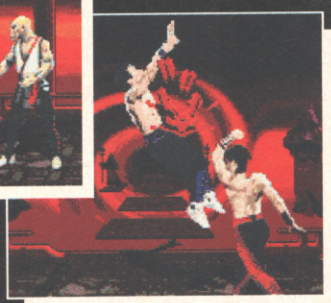
Well, there's life in the old dog yet. Indeed, the dog has in fact risen from the grave transformed into a lycanthropic red-eyed demon wolf with blood-stained jowls. The Amiga, knocked by most console owners as outdated, has only been and got the best conversion of Mortal Kombat yet seen on a home system.

The graphics, as you can see from the shots, are absolutely spot on. Not only are the sprites the right size with the right amount of detail, but they're also very well animated. Apart from some slightly sub-par scrolling there's precious little difference between MKII on an A1200 and the real thing in the arcades.

That is, until you start playing, where the Amiga button deficiency comes into play. If you're an expert on the coin-op you'll no doubt be disappointed to hear that you'll have to re-learn all the special moves. It's not so bad with a two-button configuration, but single switch players have a bunch of new techniques to master. Still, all the moves are there, and as it's actually easier to perform them all it makes for more exciting play and evens things out for inexperienced players. The only other apparent criticism is the amount of disk-swapping between two-player bouts, although this is completely eliminated if you've got an external drive. Absolutely ace.



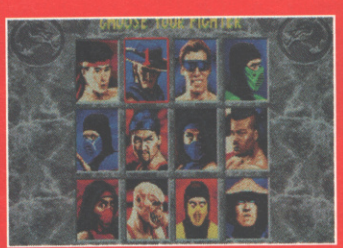
▼ *Toasty? It sure is. Not sure about the stripey spandex hot-pants though.*



▲ *MKII certainly makes up for the lack of a decent Amiga version of Street Fighter.*

OPEN THE BOX! RIP HIS HEART OUT!

Kombat vets should no doubt be over the moon to discover all the characters found in the arcade machine are present and correct in the Amiga conversion – including the smart-secret hidden characters. It's still no easier to find any of them, but at least you know they're there to be found.



VERDICT

AMIGA 1200

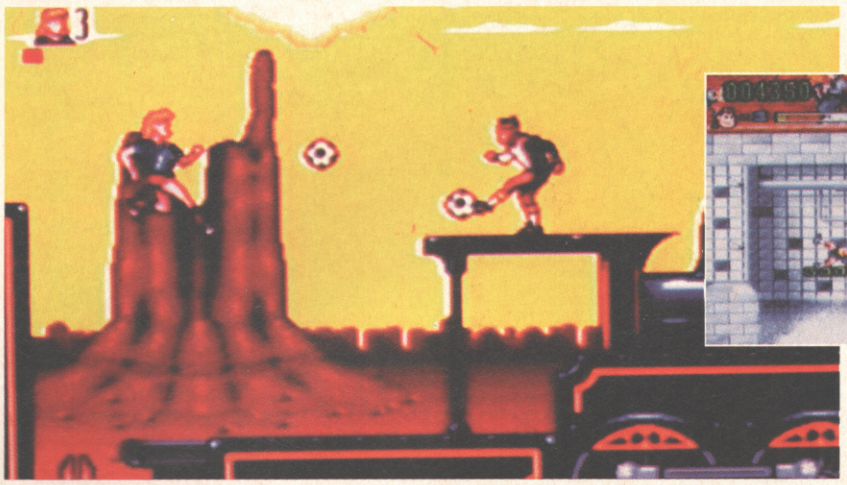
I wasn't sure how this would work given the lack of fire buttons open to Amiga owners. However, the system used for special moves and the use of double button presses for some attacks means every character has their full offensive complement and each move is fairly simple to activate. It was the quality of the conversion which counted, and Probe have done a sterling job. The action's as fast and furious as it ever was, and – to put it bluntly – if you don't buy this you're a fool. The best Amiga beat-'em-up ever.

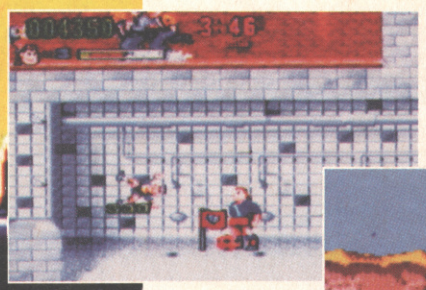
RAD AUTOMATIC

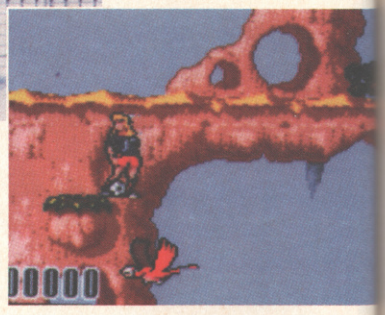
GRAPHICS	96
SOUND	92
PLAYABILITY	95
VALUE	97

OVERALL

96







BREAK LIKE THE WIND...

US Gold's Hurricanes game is licensed from the hit TV cartoon series based upon the exploits of a rum collection of football players. They're hell-bent upon winning the ultimate football match but their foes, the Gorgons, will stop at nothing to prevent them. US Gold reckon the new series of the programme will be a smash, too; it's dead chuffed it's got the rights to do the game.

GREED

You think so? You do? Excellent. Just to make sure, though, try our quick quiz:

Your right-wing grandad warbles on about how spoiled people are today. You...

A Tell him to shove off and ask him how much he'll leave you in his inheritance
B Silently agree
C Rush out and give a fiver to the three-legged old codger bus shelter fund

How did you score?

B or C – forget it. A – Feel unashamedly materialistic enough to claim your stake in this blistering £2,500 giveaway from US Gold...

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A Panasonic RXDT501 portable CD Hi-fi with dual tape decks, digitally-tuned FM radio, auto CD, record, edit and play, infra-red remote control, a clock/timer plus surround sound.

Five 2nd prizes

A Hurricanes game on SNES, Mega Drive or Game Gear PLUS a Hurricanes limited edition cartoon video. (Please state which format you require).

100 3rd prizes

A Hurricanes limited edition cartoon video

IS GOOD

How do you win?

All you have to do is answer the question below and jot it down on the back of a postcard or sealed envelope. Send your reply to "CVG gives, I take", Computer and Video Games, EMAP Images, Priory Court, 30-32 Farringdon Lane, London EC1R 3AU. Answers before January 30th, please.

And the question is...

which TV weather forecaster once told British viewers that gale-force winds would miss the UK just hours before a hurricane hit the country? Was it...

a Bill Giles, or

b Michael Fish?

Not open to employees or their relatives of EMAP Images or CentreGold. No cash equivalent will be provided. No correspondence will be entered into. The Editor's decision is final.

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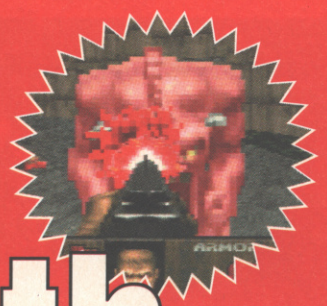
reviewed this month...



What a perfectly brilliant thing to happen for the last issue of 1994. I'm talking about the release of Virtua Fighter on the Sega Saturn, of course. And although I know that, for the moment at least, the machine is being sold on import for more than the national debt, the sheer power of Virtua has left me gasping for more. Elsewhere this issue we've got THE best versions of the two best ever beat-'em-ups, plus the first review of the new Virtua Fighter 2 coin-op, which exclusive-wise gives us a Virtua Double Whammy, don't you think?

Steve James, Managing Editor

What we're playing this month

STEVE

■ *Need For Speed/3DO*
Akin to Road Rash, but with all the comforts of a modern motor car.

■ *Doom/Jag*
Save the lives of your family and friends by taking out the frustrations of putting together a magazine on this harmless game.
■ *Doom/32X*
If that doesn't work, try it again with this one before they lock you away.

GARY

■ *Virtua Fighter/Saturn*
It's even better than we thought it would be. Except the box for the Saturn looks a bit cheap.

■ *Snatcher/M-CD*
This is actually quite amusing, which is something of a turn-up for the books.
■ *Biker Mice/SNES*
Not so much that I wanted to play it as that I had too, really. Has anyone ever seen the cartoon? It's daft.

Virtua Fighter p.12

Mortal Kombat II p.49

RAD

■ *Virtua Fighter/Saturn*
Quite probably the most impressive home game ever in the world ever ever. Absolutely brilliant and just what I want for Christmas (ha!).
■ *Snatcher/M-CD*
One of the first games I've played right through to the very end in ages. Highly entertaining.

MARK

■ *Samurai Shodown/3DO*
I like my beat 'em ups like I like my pies – raw, bloody and dripping with lard. And this is like that, but without lard.

■ *Mortal Kombat/Amiga*
More gore and so on, but this time with babies too (another fave pie ingredient).
■ *Super Streetfighter 2 X 3DO*
Streetfighter 2 may be getting a bit long in the tooth now, but this is probably the best conversion yet. Shame about the lack of pies.

TOM

■ *Virtua Fighter 2/Arcade*
I'm a big fan of the original game, so I was happy to see AM2 have made such an excellent job of the sequel.
■ *Doom/32X*
I actually think that the border is quite cute, to be honest. And I was wondering if it would go out with me.
■ *Snatcher/M-CD*
Good plot, decent dialogue, plenty of investigating to do... and stacks of blood and death and perversity! Wahey!

This month's hot-hits

Here at CVG we don't give high scores away lightly. A game has to be rather special before it scores over 90% and a CVG Hit. Even rarer though is a CVG Gold (awarded to games that have pushed back the boundaries of gaming) but don't expect to see more than a few of these a year as it takes a score of over 96% to earn one. Anyway, here are the top games this month...

12 Virtua Fighter/Saturn
48 Super Streetfighter 2 X/3DO
49 Mortal Kombat 2/Amiga
54 Snatcher/MCD
66 Samurai Shodown/3DO
72 Doom/Jaguar and 32X
86 Virtua Fighter 2/Arcade
94 Need For Speed/3DO

The big picture

If any other version of a game is available, then we'll tell you via our Alternatives and Other Versions boxes. We'll even tell you if it's destined for any other formats. For consistency's sake, games retain the original scores in alternative boxes.

■ MEGA-CD

■ RPG ■ Konami

■ £39.99 ■ Out December

■ No other versions available

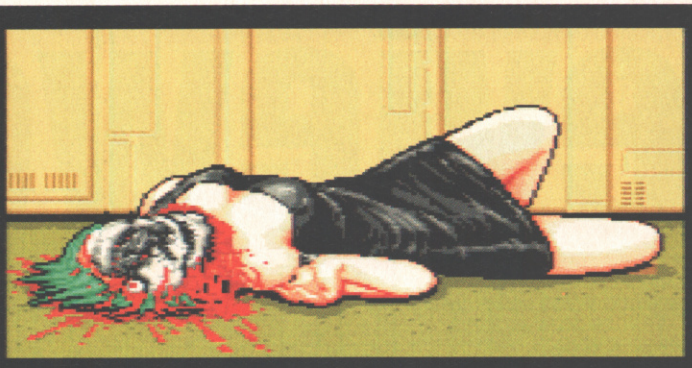
■ No other versions planned

snatcher

Hooray! It's a UK console game that's not only an RPG, but it's packed with unwholesome behaviour!

Guess what everyone, the future sucks. Chemical weapons pollution is way up, ozone levels are way down. Every remaining city in the world is a hybrid of modern day Tokyo and a medieval leper colony. There's a surprise, eh? Actually, there is a bit of a surprise, as Neo Kobe, the world's top famous city, is being bothered by a plague of robot assassins known as Snatchers. These malevolent mechanoids appear completely human from the outside and take great pride in knocking off influential pillars of society and assuming their places to further whatever nefarious aims they may have. You are cast as Gillian Seed, a government agent (with amnesia, plot twist fans) who specialises in hunting down and destroying Snatchers with a little help from your robot Navigator sidekick called Metal Gear.

If you're just looking forward to the destroying bits you may be better off looking elsewhere, as Snatcher is pretty intensive on the investigative side and a little lacking in arcade action, unless sporadic (Justifier light gun compatible if you're interested) shooting sections are your idea of an all-out gatfest (*eh? - Ed*). However, fans of gore and perversity should be well happy with the 18-rated pics and text which proliferate throughout the course of the game.

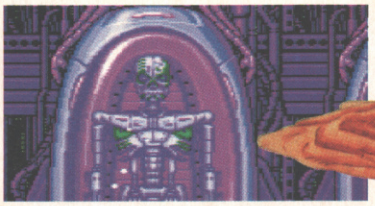


▲ *The trouble with Snatchers is that they're able to assume the form of any human being thanks to their flesh-moulding facilities. This one looks not unlike a blood-spattered robot. What a cunning disguise.*

◀ *This is your chief, complete with dodgy 'tache.*

WELCOME TO THE TEAM... BANG

It's your first day on the job, you've just had a quick briefing from the boss on what is expected of you and what happens? The guy you'll be working with radios in with an emergency request for back-up, that's what. Here's a quick run-down of what the new kid can expect...



▲ *Well, here's where the call came from. There's no-one around so it looks like you'll have to get inside.*

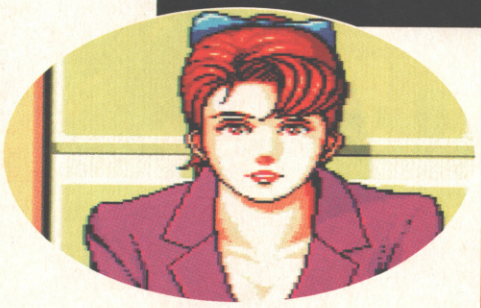
▲ *Hmm, what's this lying here on the floor?*

▲ *It's your partner's Navigator, who helps out with evidence analysis and suchlike, and it's in a bad way.*

▲ *Skrelps! Much like it's owner, it must be said! His head has been twisted completely off! Aiee!*

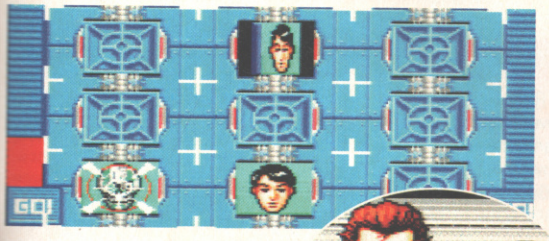
● GAME BY KONAMI ● CONTACT KONAMI (0895 853000) FOR INFORMATION

Metal Gear, ***your mech-anoid pal and banter partner, is actually named after an old Konami game, an example of a number of sad in-jokes the software house have gleefully saddled Snatcher with.***



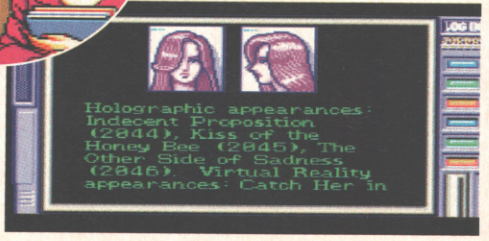
This here is Mika, who works on reception. She's pretty useful in the beginning of the game, but gradually becomes less and less help as things hot up – as indeed happens with all your early allies.

Harry, the token gruff bloke with a beard is (unsurprisingly) an engineer. If you've got mechanical difficulties along the way, he's your man. But what exactly is the secret of his mysterious past? Eh?



If you're not using your Konami light gun it can take a bit of practice to get the hang of the targetting system for your blaster. Make sure you put in a couple of practice sessions in the shooting gallery at headquarters.

Jordan, the office mainframe, contains data on just about every person in the city, as well as extensive files on the history and sociology of Neo Kobe. Check out the ID file on everyone you meet.



GIVE US A PIECE OF EVIDENCE

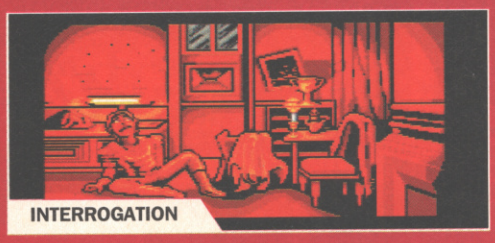
As a top raincoat-wearing detective you'll doubtless want to get looking for some clues and evidence. There are a number of ways to get hold of what information you want, all of which are pictured here. The most useful two are probably Napolean, your informant (if you can find him) and Jordan, the super computer at your HQ.

INFORMANT

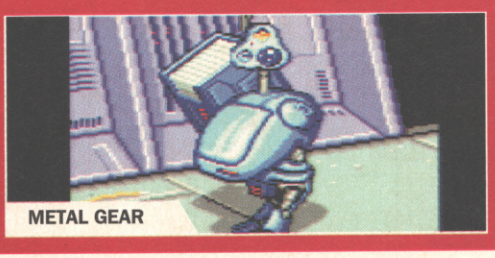
CRIME SCENE

JORDAN

QUESTIONING



INTERROGATION



METAL GEAR

▲ *Things are getting rather cosy, but is it just your particulars that she wants to take down?*

SECOND OPINION

It's been some time since an RPG caused such a massive stir in the office. Just about everyone has their own saved position and has taken to wearing headphones or covering their ears lest they pick up unwanted information on what happens later in the game. Basically, Snatcher is a title which all kinds of people really want to play. The plot is unpredictable without being overly ridiculous and the lighter moments balance the gore out nicely. Very great.

GARY LORD

▲ *Down at the the local cyber-disco a descendent of Billy Idol gets a bit too familiar.*

ALTERNATIVE

IN THE CINEMA

- **Pulp Fiction**
- **Quentin Tarantino/@£5**

A lot less sex and violence than you'll find in Snatcher, but there's a lot more swearing – if you're into that sort of thing of course.

- **NOT PREVIOUSLY REVIEWED**

VERDICT

MEGA CD

Snatcher might have the plot of a weirdo 80s science fiction B-movie, but it's also one of the most compelling role playing games to reach a console in a while. Clever, well put together, atmospheric and sometimes genuinely funny, Snatcher makes for an engrossing game. The shooting sections aren't so hot, however, so it's likely that blasting fans will without a doubt be disappointed – and the graphics look a little dated; but if you've got an attention span longer than three minutes you should rightly enjoy Snatcher considerably.

RAD AUTOMATIC

GRAPHICS	81
SOUND	92
PLAYABILITY	93
VALUE	88

OVERALL

90

WIN! WIN! WIN!

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John Menzies in association with ocean Software, the people who brought Syndicate (SNES) and Inferno into our homes, are offering one lucky person the chance to win loads of console equipment! What's more, their generosity does not stop there! – 50 games from a selection of Ocean's extensive multi-format catalogue will form the equally impressive runners-up prizes! These fabulous prizes are brought to you by ocean, top newsagent John Menzies, and EMAP Images, the leading light in video game magazines. Entering the competition is simplicity itself. Just follow these pointers:

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MEGA DRIVE/SNES

■ Platform ■ Acclaim
■ £Unconfirmed ■ Out Now
■ No other versions available
■ No other versions planned

No doubt after Spidey this guy has to be the coolest superhero ever to grace a Marvel comic, and now he's decided to drop in and visit you too...

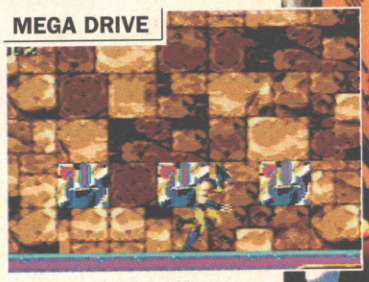
Saturday mornings, don't you just love 'em? Your week of toil is over and out, and the only thing that is required of you is to gradually come out of Slumberland, futon or whatever is to reach for that remote control and get in some serious Sat morn' TV, and what better televisual feast than the X-Men. Now though, SNES and Mega Drive owners can have their favourite mutant ('cos he is everyone's fave) as a constant videogame companion as Acclaim have immortalised him in his very own platformer.

Now, don't groan 'Not another platformer', because although essentially it is, the game's style is individual enough to disguise what is a fairly formulaic platform game, on the Mega Drive at least. The first levels on both formats are gargantuan affairs where you have to escape from the mutant labaratory, disposing, courtesy of Wolverine's multifaceted moves (on Mega Drive at least), of armoured drones, end-of-level bosses and work your way through endless puzzling levers, lifts and disintegrating platforms or painful opponents who just won't give you a fair fight. This of course depends on which version you're playing as one is a pleasure the other is pure pain. Which is which? Well cast your eyes across the page.

SNES

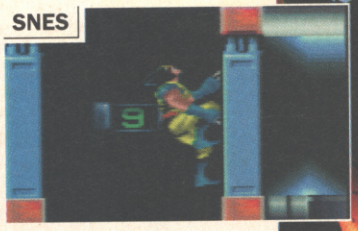
▲ The collision detection in the SNES version is rather lame, sometimes you'll be trying to hit someone, be making contact but you'll have no effect.

MEGA DRIVE



▲ The levels in the Mega Drive version are on the hard side of tough should we say.

SNES



▲ One main advantage SNES Wolvie has over his cousin is that he can walk up walls and across ceilings, Spidey style.

MEGA DRIVE

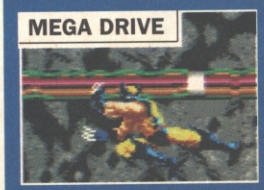
▼ The ninjas are both well drawn and animated, and a bugger to kill.

SNES

▲ The scenery in the Mega Drive version is far more interactive than in the SNES.

MOVE OVER!

MEGA DRIVE



1. It's worth taking time to become au fait with the moves; this flying jump gets rid of the flying drones.

MEGA DRIVE

2. If they're coming in too low then this just-above-the-ground kick is the one to try and use.

MEGA DRIVE

3. My fave move of the bunch has to be this flying swipe, or as I've dubbed it – The Blue One.

SNES

4. This sions a double enemie

● GAME BY ACCLAIM ● CONTACT ACCLAIM (071-344 5000) FOR INFORMATION

wolverine

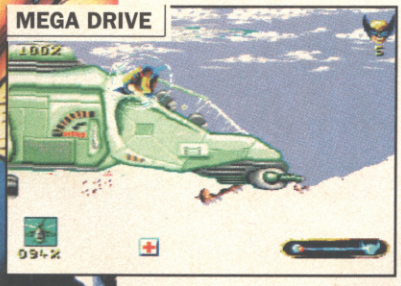
MEGA DRIVE

▲ Well come on X-Men, don't just stand there, try a bit of mouth-to-mouth; have you never watched Casualty?

SNES

▲ The graphics on the SNES version are not as clear and well animated as those used on Mega Drive Wolverine.

MEGA DRIVE

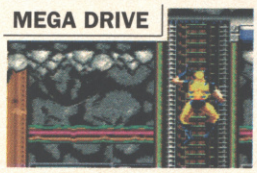


▲ The MD Wolverine is dead hard, and the sound sample when he breaks through glass is hyper realistic.

FOXIE...

OK, don't expect FMV intros but the one on the Mega Drive is far superior to the SNES machine's attempt.

MEGA DRIVE



▲ Wolvie doesn't quite scurry up ladders, unfortunately.

VERDICT

MEGA DRIVE

The Sega version of Wolverine more than does justice to Marvel's premier X-Man. The programmers have encapsulated all of his cool characteristics, and he moves so fluidly it's a pure joy to discover the sprite's armoury of moves and kicks. once you suss the basic idea behind the puzzles things become a lot less complicated and the levels are varied enough to keep Mr Monotony at bay. Not as polished or as fun as Earthworm or Mickey, but it's a change from the cutesy look that seems to be vogue at the mo.

GARY LORD

GRAPHICS	89
SOUND	89
PLAYABILITY	88
VALUE	84

OVERALL

89

VERDICT

SNES

The only thing that playing the SNES version does is make you yearn for the game on Mega Drive. The Super NES version just pales by comparison. The graphics have not had as much time and attention paid to them, and the sprite never feels fully under your control, the scrolling is slow and the levels, although some look similar, aren't as varied or intricate as the Mega Drive's. Not only this, but the levels and the collision detection is frustrating in the extreme, and trying to find a clear route through is Painful with a capital P.

GARY LORD

GRAPHICS	70
SOUND	80
PLAYABILITY	68
VALUE	60

OVERALL

70

ALTERNATIVE

3DO

ANOTHER WORLD

INTERPLAY/£49.99

A far more stylish version of the Prince of Persia engine, this is an excellent platform game full to the brim with atmosphere, gameplay and kickin' graphics and sound.

ISSUE 152: 90%

SNES

4. This move is in both versions and is handy for those double whammie attacks enemies are so fond of.

SNES

5. The SNES Wolvie seems to have been spending far longer in the gym than his Mega Drive mate.

SNES

6. This is the ole up-and-under and is ever so handy for disposing of drone spewing machines.

A1200

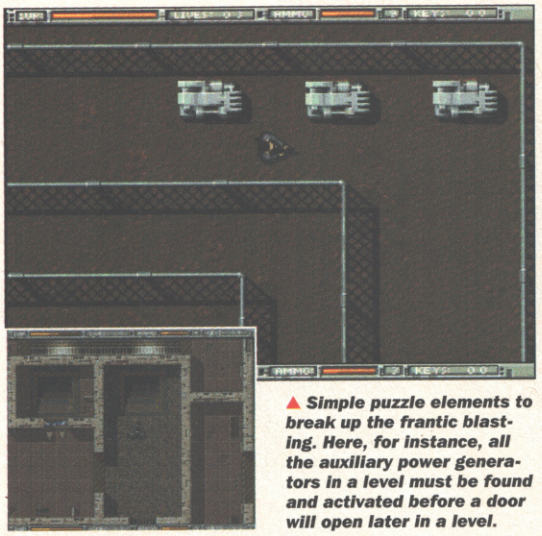
■ Shoot-'em-up ■ Team 17
■ £19.99 ■ Out Now
■ No other versions available
■ Auto detects and enhances for AGA machines; CD32 version planned

alien breed: tower assault

The bitches are back in Team 17's explosive finale to the Alien Breed series...

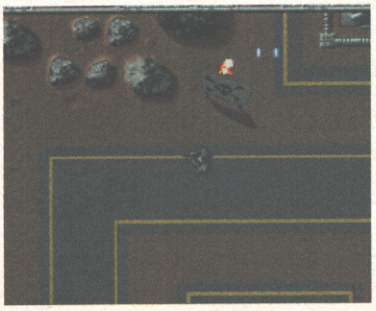
Zip back in time three years and ask any gamesplayer who Team 17 are/were and they'd probably respond with a guppy–like stare. That soon changed though when the Wakefield wonders crashed in on the software scene with the classic blaster Alien Breed. Such was Alien Breed's success that it has since spawned a 'remixed' budget version (one of the best selling Amiga budget titles of all time incidentally), last year's proper sequel Alien Breed 2 and now Tower Assault.

Essentially Tower Assault irons out the flaws of the previous games. Most noticeably the characters now have the ability to fire backwards while retreating, which is useful for avoiding those nasty aliens pouncing from behind. Game size has also been vastly increased with each level featuring multiple exit points. Not only does this negate the linear feel of previous Breed games and offer greater lastability, it also ends the frustration suffered if stuck on one particular route as another can be tried. Other fresh bitz include new varieties of alien like the ammo' wasting invisible breed, plus different level types including completely dark ones with just the aliens' beady blue eyes for company.



▲ Simple puzzle elements to break up the frantic blasting. Here, for instance, all the auxiliary power generators in a level must be found and activated before a door will open later in a level.

▲ The sound FX have been beefed up, especially some of the alien squelching noises.



As well as ▶ aliens look out for man-made dangers like mines and security lasers which are scattered across the levels.

▼ Alien Breed was always a lot like the arcade classic Gauntlet, and Tower Assault features similar baddie spewing generators.

COMING SOON

CD32
■ Tower Assault
■ Team 17

Tower Assault on the CD-32 will include heaps of rendered footage, digital sound and music, as well as the complete Alien Breed 2 game, previously unreleased on CD. Bargain-bleedin'-tastic!

■ EXPECTED RELEASE: TBA

VERDICT

A1200

Tower Assault is the definitive version of the Breed series. The multiple exit points in particular make all the difference and stop the frustration of getting stuck at certain points in the game, as well as increasing long term gameplay. Graphically it's an improvement too, especially over Alien Breed, but the high level of scenery detail can lead to debris being mistaken for pick-ups. A solid purchase if you own no previous Breed games, but have a close look if you've got Breed 2 since it is rather similar in places.

STEVE JAMES

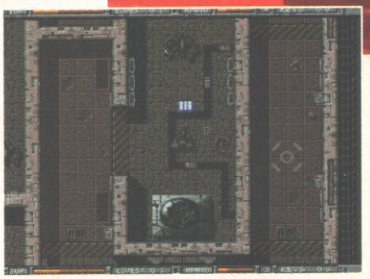
■ GRAPHICS	86
■ SOUND	85
■ PLAYABILITY	85
■ VALUE	88

OVERALL ■

86

▼ It's the start of the game and your partner's dead already. Not good. Still I bet there's a few quid in his wallet that he won't miss!

Some of the ▶ graphics and sound FX are quite gory at times (especially where the aliens are eating human remains) so Tower Assault has been given an 11-plus certification.



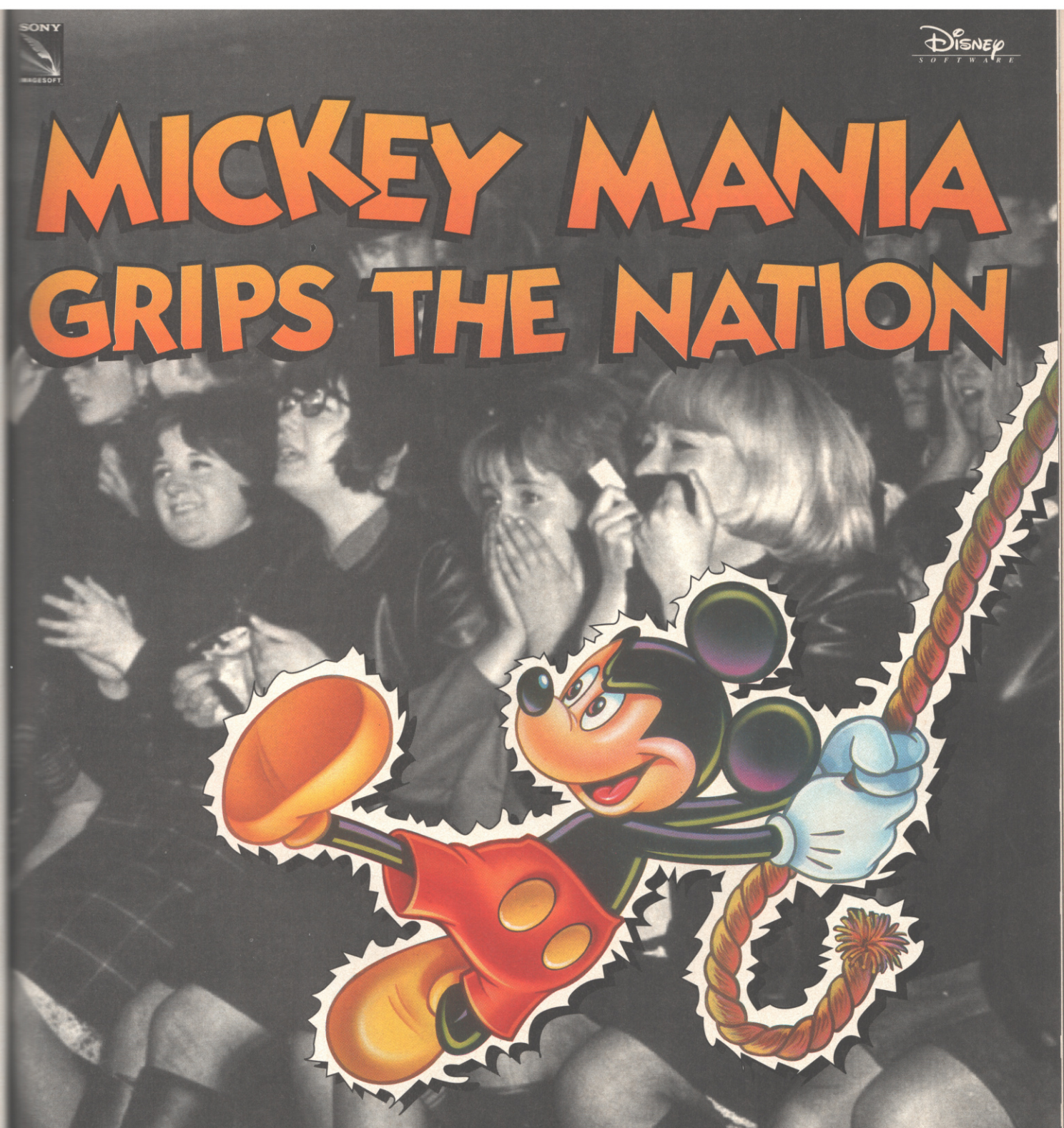
Not only ▶ does the new retreat feature look cool, it allows the player to fire backwards while making a hasty escape.

● GAME BY TEAM 17 ● CONTACT TEAM 17 (0924 291867) FOR INFORMATION

SONY IMAGESOFT

Disney SOFTWARE

MICKEY MANIA GRIPS THE NATION



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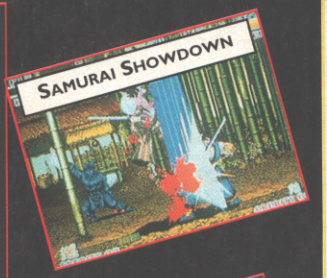
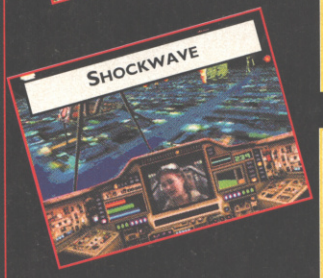
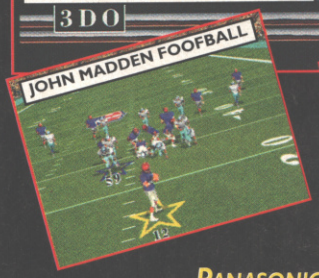
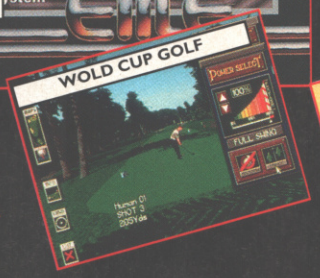
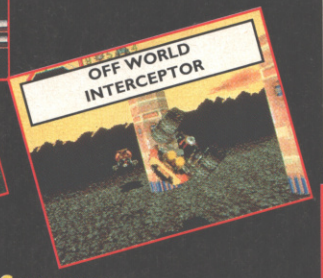
3DO Actual Screenshot











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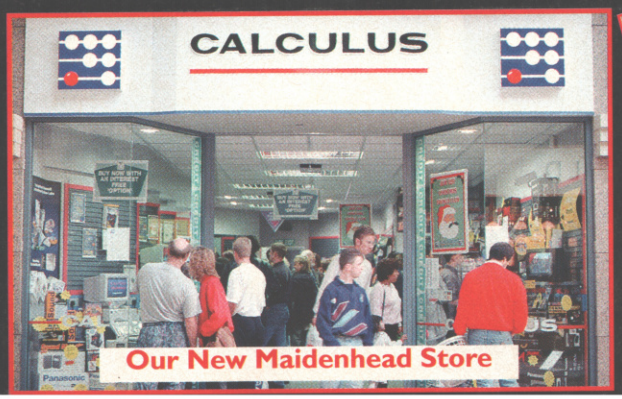

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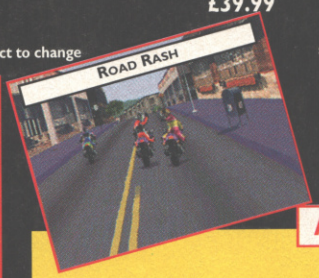

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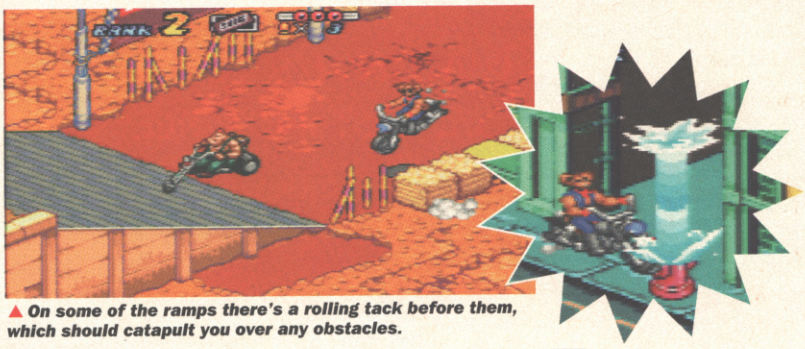
SNES

■ Racing ■ Konami
■ £49.99 ■ Out Now
■ No other versions available
■ No other versions planned

From minor TV stardom to, well shall we say, minor game stardom, it's the mice with their feisty bikes...



▲ On some of the ramps there's a rolling tack before them, which should catapult you over any obstacles.

biker mice from mars

The possibilities of follow-up programs to The Biker Mice From Mars are of course endless, the new series could be infinite in range. Much like space itself, where Mars in fact is. So can we expect The Stunt Racing Stick Insects from Saturn? We can only hope not, seeing as my CVG comrades have informed me that said Mice from Mars, unlike their spider comrades, are not exactly we would call cool.

This is a racing game where you get to race as one of the dear little rodents on a variety (albeit an uninteresting variety) of three-quarter view tracks. All the racers have different attributes (albeit not really that different), ie Rodent 1 is faster while Rodent 2 has a better grip. Each race becomes more complicated and your opponents more tricky to pass depending on whether you've opted for easy, normal or hard. And you can nip into the Race Shop to acquire bike accoutrements like tires, better engines and would you believe Snickers, formerly (and preferably) known as Marathons. Product placement, ain't it great?

Pre-race and you get a quick look at the course in full so that you can reccie the hazards. ▶

▲ You've got to finish in the top three to get through to the next round.

Some of the scenery will interact with you, so if you bump into the fire hydrant expect to get rather wet. ▶

There are various projectiles that your fellow racers will bung at you. ▶

GONE SHOPPING

Should the mood take you simply nip into the shop for that V8 engine you've always wanted, or pig out on as many Marathons as your waistline can handle.

▲ If you go astray then this helping hand comes down to put you back on track.

VERDICT

SNES

If you're after a decent Konami game check out Batman in issue 156. Biker Mice is a racing game in a similar vein to Rock 'n' Roll Racing, but not quite as playable or as much fun or with such a good soundtrack. The race tracks do not have enough obstacles to make the game particularly interesting or varied, and don't expect any sexy Mode 7 scrolling, cos it ain't here. No real challenge and maybe if there was a Micro Machines-style two-player mode there might have been a reason for buying this, but it hasn't and there isn't.

GARY LORD

GRAPHICS	70
SOUND	79
PLAYABILITY	70
VALUE	69

OVERALL

68

ALTERNATIVE

MEGA DRIVE/SNES/ PC/AMIGA/GAME GEAR

■ Micro Machines
■ Codemasters/£Various

Four cars race round various locations in the house in a bid for domination.

■ ISSUES 135, 144, 148, 149 – all scores in high 80% range bar PC (70%).

■ 3DO
■ Racing Game ■ Crystal Dynamics
■ £39.99 ■ Out Now
■ No other versions available
■ No other versions planned

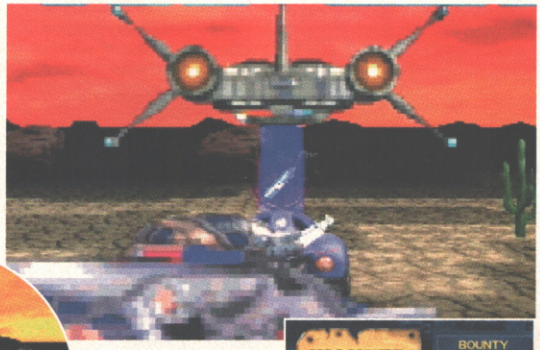
off world interceptor

Get set for a blast with the boy racers of the future in the latest from 3DO masters Crystal Dynamics...

Off World Interceptor features some brilliant graphics and none of that streamed off CD rubbish that can't be interacted with. Everything can be driven over, through or blasted.

Beach buggies are fab aren't they? Think how much better they'd be if they had a few sizzling laser cannons strapped on to lay waste to anything unfortunate enough to cross their path, especially if it resembled, in any way, David Hasselhoff. Off World Interceptor offers just such an opportunity. Set over six particularly unfriendly alien worlds, babe-less post-apocalyptic Baywatch sets if you like, each is divided into separate zones with the obligatory mother of all bosses at the end. A nifty two-player battle mode is also available.

In-game hazards include ruddy great hills, all manner of ground and air-based enemies plus other racers doing their best to hinder the player's progress. Help comes in the form of pick-ups scattered around the worlds, although these are often difficult to reach. They include fuel and missiles plus cash for spending in the speed shop between levels. It offers an extensive range of equipment and more general objects like extra lives and vehicles, although both these options come with a price tag only affordable by collecting the bounty after wasting an end-of-level boss.



Reach certain points in the game and a refuel ship beams down supplies. They're well situated as they tend to appear just when needed.

At the end of every world a seriously tough boss has to be taken out. A large supply of missiles is handy because the lasers do little damage.

Beat a boss and a hefty reward will be payed out.

Like Cybermorph any of the worlds can be selected right from the start of the game but some are much harder than others, natch' of course.

SUPERMARKET SWEEP

A whole range of add ons are available to the discerning shopper in Off World Interceptor. Unlike real life though, there never seems to be a sale on...

Frequently needed items like extra nitros, missiles and lives can be found on this screen...

...while entering the shop enables you to buy better and more expensive vehicles.

VERDICT

3DO

I didn't like this at first as it uses more fingers than a Van Halen guitar solo takes to play. Once the controls are mastered I was happier. This satisfaction extends to the audio-visuals; stunning texture mapped graphics, bitmapped explosions, and chunky FX; they're all here in abundance. Gameplay's smart at first, especially with the great sense of freedom to wander the landscape offers, but my overall mark is lower than it should be because there's little variety, either from the levels or the different cars and weapons available.

RIK SKEWS

■ GRAPHICS	86
■ SOUND	83
■ PLAYABILITY	76
■ VALUE	70

OVERALL ■

77

ALTERNATIVE

SNES
■ Stunt Race FX
■ Nintendo/£49.99

A much more appealing buggy based game which is fantastically playable, especially in one-player mode. The two player option in Off World Interceptor is better though.

■ ISSUE 153: 91%

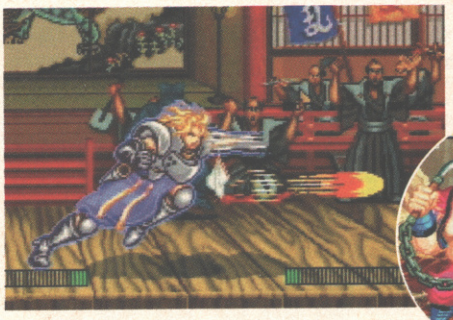
● GAME BY CRYSTAL DYNAMICS ● CONTACT CRYSTAL DYNAMICS (071-973 0011) FOR INFORMATION

■ 3DO

■ Beat-'em-up ■ Crystal Dynamics
■ £49.99 ■ Out Now
■ SNES and Mega Drive versions available
■ No other versions planned

CVG HIT!

Better than Street Fighter 2? More action packed than Mortal Kombat 2? Samurai Shodown could be all these, and of course much, much more...



◀ *The special moves are activated through Streetfighter-style joypad and combinations.*

samurai

It's one thing to do something well, it's another to do it with style. This is particularly important in a genre filled to bursting point with clone upon clone, many of which are very good anyway. Which is why Samurai Shodown shone in the arcades. It takes its lead from those ace Seventies martial arts movies where the action seems to freeze-frame when the fighters make contact and the speech is always totally out of synch.

It's this kind of action which is faithfully re-created in Shodown. The fighting's all together faster and more vicious than Street Fighter, without having to resort to the over-the-top violence gimmick of Mortal Kombat 2. Instead Samurai Shodown resorts to a little known tactic – gameplay. After the basic special moves are loads of extra ones to discover, many of which you're likely to encounter by accident thanks to the 3DO's quirky joypad.

Even though this version of the game has been superseded in the arcades, and now on Neo Geo CD, it's still exceptional. We can but hope that we'll be seeing games such as Art Of Fighting 2 coming to the 3DO next year...

Some attacks call for your opponent to be close up, but do huge amounts of damage.

FIGHTING HEROES

***Hoahmaru** Mercenary samurai who strikes with deadly speed.*

***Nakoruru** Agile Ainu with the strength of steel.*

***Ukyo Tachibana** Stuck-up samurai and blood rival of Hoahmaru.*

***Jubei Yagyu** Imperial Enforcer – the ultimate samurai warrior...*

***Galford** The American Ninja from way out west.*

***Kyoshiro Senryo** Crazed Kabuki with a warrior's spear...*

***Wan Fu** The Chinese Warlord who's collecting heads.*

***Charlotte** The deadly accurate French swords-mistress.*

***Tam Tam** Inca warrior out to save his village.*

***Earthquake** Blubbersome Texas brawler with deadly wind.*

***Genan Shiranui** The clawed freak from Devil's island.*

***Hanzo Hattori** Killer Iga Ninja with mystical talents.*

● GAME DESIGN BY SNK ● CONVERSION BY CRYSTAL DYNAMICS
● CONTACT CRYSTAL DYNAMICS (071-973 0011) FOR INFORMATION

HAND JOB

During particular gruelling bouts it's not uncommon for fighters to become parted with their weapons. In this situation is imperative to reclaim it as soon as possible if you don't want your hero to then become parted with bits of their body. However, if this sort of unarmed combat suits you, there's an option to remove the weapons. This completely changes the tactics you need to win a fight as it takes a lot longer to kill a fighter in hand-to-hand combat.

▲ *Most screens contain a generous amount of objects to slice up....*

shodown

The bonus round lets you vent any remaining anger, should you have any, on straw dolls. ◀

◀ *Earthquake is probably the biggest character ever to feature in a beat-'em-up. But pit him against himself, and they cancel each other out. So you won't want to do that, really.*

SECOND OPINION

When you've seen as many beat-em-'ups as I have, even a game as good as this doesn't quite have the attraction it used to. Technically it's a perfect conversion of the coin-op – which is exactly what it should be considering the 3DO's power, but I just can't understand why they opted for this when Sam Shodown 2 was just around the corner. Perhaps it's the sequel that prejudiced me, but I just didn't enjoy this as much as I used to.

GARY LORD

VERDICT

3DO

While Street Fighter and Mortal Kombat have gone from strength to strength on home machines, Sam Shodown has suffered at the hands of extremely dodgy conversions. Whether that's to do with the game being a bit complicated to convert, or programmer incompetency, it's good to see, finally, that justice has been done to one of the best beat-'em-ups ever. This is a perfect conversion of the SNK coin-op, with plenty of options, a good control system and no gremlins. If you're sick of Street Fighter, this is the game to buy.

MARK PATTERSON

GRAPHICS	88
SOUND	84
PLAYABILITY	93
VALUE	88

OVERALL **91**

Some of the special attacks are down-right unfair, such as Galford's surprise teleport. ▶

Not all the attacks are orthodox. Earthquake's bowl-shaker, for example, wouldn't go down well in most street brawls. ▼

▲ *Galford and Nakoruru use animals in their battles, which is handy 'cos you can't knock an animal out.*

◀ *Squeamish types can switch the blood off, but the game's not half as much fun without it.*

◀ *The viewpoints zoom in and out just like the original game, although with fat bloke here it doesn't matter how far back the camera goes – he still looks massive.*

WORLD BEATER

MD/SNES/GG/GB

■ Mortal Kombat 2

■ Acclaim/£29.99-54.99

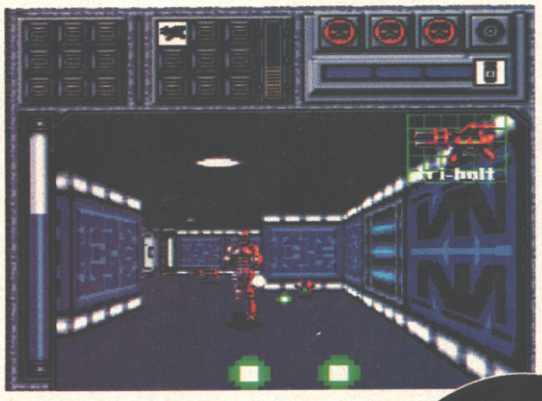
Simply one of the best beat-'em-ups to ever grace a games machine. Each version is as true to the coin-op original as possible for that particular format.

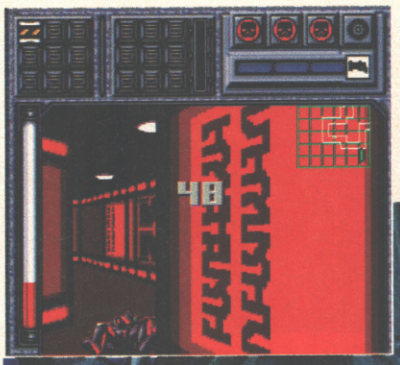
■ ISSUE 154: MD 97% SNES 96% GG 88% GB 90%

■ MEGA DRIVE

■ Shoot-'em-up ■ Domark
■ £39.99 ■ Out January 1995
■ No other versions available
■ Mega-CD version planned

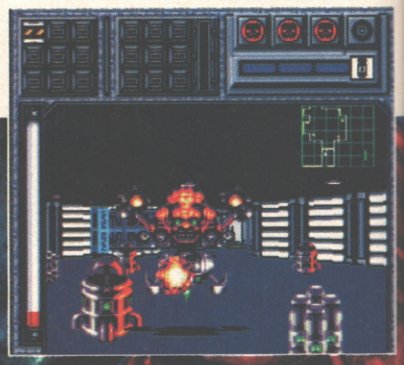
Doom on the Mega Drive... well not quite, but here's the latest 16-bit clone of the aforementioned, unfortunately there doesn't look like there's a lot of blood...





▲ It's Countdown time, you have to make your way through the maze of tunnels back to the beginning and try and pick a consonant, vowel and chat up Carol Vorderman.

◀ I have to admit that my favourite gun has to be the tri-bolt, i mean why kill one alien at a time when you can kill three, eh?



Those R2D2-like creatures on the left of the screen are your restart points, while those on the left are you armour replenishments, which you need at the moment. ▼

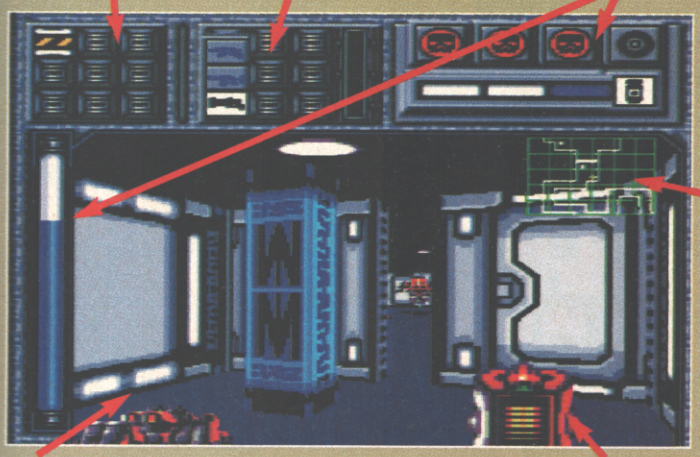
You're a bloodthirsty lot you know. Just as a couple of years ago all movie producers needed to do to sell a film was place a marathon sex scene, à la Basic Instinct, now there's one sure way of making you buy a video game, and that's to ensure that there's a bit of blood contained within the game, à la Doom. And Bloodshot is a Doom style shoot-'em-up for the Mega Drive, where you, as an Elite Trooper, must invade an alien battleship, find your way through the maze of corridors and destroy this big, head-like plasma node; and then get the hell out of there (the way you came, only it's darker and there's a time limit) before the whole thing blows sky high. And that is that.

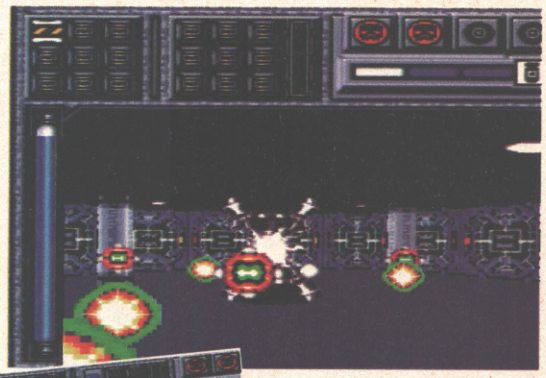
The thing is though, there's not really very much blood at all. In fact, there's not even a proverbial pin prick, which leaves you thinking that maybe a bit of blood and gore in your video game isn't that gratuitous after all, since it certainly adds to the effect of the game. This does not mean that you don't have plenty of ammo' though, and for those big end-of-level n'er-do-wells there's always your grenade or assault cannon. There's a wee map on screen to guide you round and numerous restart points and keys to be collected, so that you can find that last alien to blow. For those of you with friends there's a two player mode too, and unlike Zero Tolerance, you only need one machine to play it.

bloodshot

● GAME BY KREMLIN ● CONTACT DOMARK (081-780 2222) FOR INFORMATION

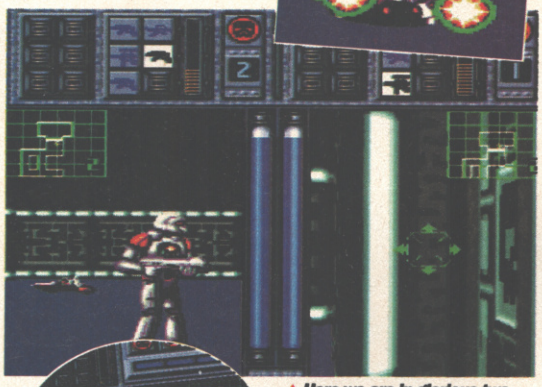
BUT WHAT'S IT ALL MEAN?

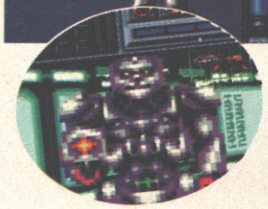




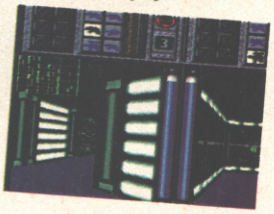
▲ At the end of a level you reach this big head-like creature, and you have to make mincemeat, nay mince pies, out of him.

▲ It's time for that Plasma Assault Cannon to be put to good use.





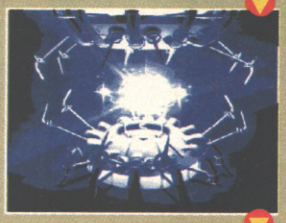
▲ Here we are in glorious two-player land!



▲ He may resemble a teddy bear but I'd keep well out of his way if I were you.

SMOKEY

Aliens, no matter how many video-games they're in, still need repelling, and this is the force of 'em that needs getting rid of this time...



ALTERNATIVE

JAGUAR

- Doom
- Atari/£69.99

Expensive stuff indeed but a near-PC-quality game on a £229 console. More accomplished than Alien Versus Predator, which is also on Jag, and with a slight edge on 32X Doom.

- THIS ISSUE: 95%

VERDICT

MEGA DRIVE

Bloodshot does lack a certain je ne sais quoi. Well no actually, it just lacks a bit of blood and meaty shot guns. Most of your ammo is of the 'pup, pup' variety. A good Uzi-style sample would not have gone amiss. The extra element of having to find your way out once you've killed the big baddie can be irritating too since when you go forwards you always veer to left and right and the small map is virtually useless. Not a bad Doom clone though; I preferred Zero Tolerance, but if you want a cheap two player mode then go for this.

GARY LORD

- GRAPHICS 89
- SOUND 79
- PLAYABILITY 78
- VALUE 70

OVERALL

84

SECOND OPINION

Seeing as Doom is the game that everyone is going for at the moment, and not everyone has the cash to upgrade to a 32X (see page 72) then you can't go far wrong with Domark's derivative maze-style shoot-'em-up. There's not a great deal of atmosphere here, but the gameplay's intact and the added 'Get out of there element' just makes each level that little bit harder. The two player mode is cool my only real gripe is no hard core sound FX.

MARK PATTERSON

SNES

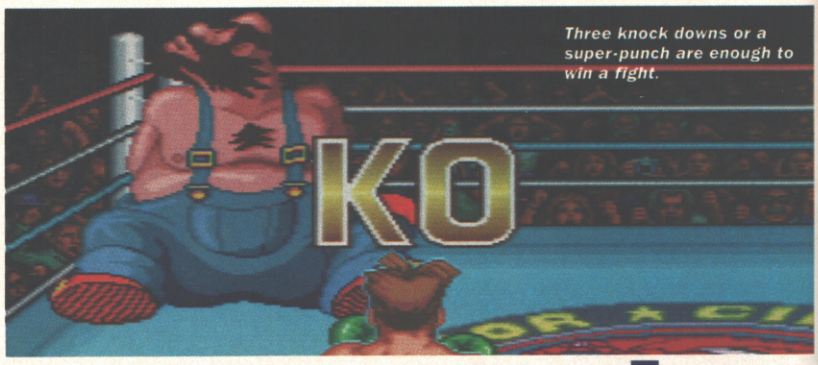
Beat-'em-up **Nintendo**

£44.99 **Out Now**

No other versions available

No other versions planned

We don't need any fireballs or other Japanese fighting efforts. We're British, we fight with our fists and Queensbury rules because we're innately hard, don't ya know?



Three knock downs or a super-punch are enough to win a fight.

super punch out

With the current decline in boxing standards, we reckon the WBA et al should go back to the old days where two men in long johns, with handlebar moustaches and names like Jack 'scrapper' McJack used to slap each other, sans gloves, for the best part of a couple of days. None of this softie gloves and gum shields stuff. But until that happens it's highly unlikely we're going to see a bare-knuckle boxing sim, so we've got to make do with Super Punch Out, which is just as well seeing as it's jolly good.

It's based on Elite's old 8-bit punch-up sim Frank Bruno's Boxing, with similar, although improved, gameplay and one or two familiar faces. Well, familiar until you've punched their noses flat and fractured a few bones. But it's all in a cartoon stylee, so that's OK. Right?

One of the nice things about the game is that it does give you a good feeling of contact when you land a decent shot. It's certainly a lot less painful than doing it for real, and possibly a lot more fun.

▲ The key to winning fights is adapting your tactics for each opponent.

Dragon Chan's a survivor from the original Frank Bruno's Boxing. He still cheats by kicking his way through a bout. ▶

TKO

Apart from being a rather potent and expensive cocktail which makes you fall over, a TKO is also the way you win fights. Flatten your opponent three times and the ref obligingly calls a halt to the contest, declares you the winner and lets you move on to the next fight where you'll invariably be hammered into the canvas.

1. This ancient Frenchman is a bit of a doddle, so use this opportunity to practice your punching prowess.

2. Landing a series of hits powers the meter up at the bottom of the screen. When it's all the way to the end your gloves start to flash...

3. ...which means he can unload with super blows such as crosses, uppercuts and ultra-fast combinations.

4. Finish him off with any one of those blows and your score goes through the roof – as does the other boxer's head.

▲ There are four divisions of increasingly tough fighters to scrap your way through.

▼ Aiming shots towards the stomach is often the best way to win fights, but it doesn't look half as good as smacking the other fella in the face.

◀ They might look outrageous but the computer boxers' special attacks are easy to avoid.

ALTERNATIVE

MEGA DRIVE

Greatest Heavyweights

Sega/£44.99

Punch-out style box-'em-up which is very playable, but, like the SNES game reviewed in these pages, it has a few problems with long-term lastability.

NOT PREVIOUSLY REVIEWED

VERDICT

SNES

Considering that, from first impressions at least, Super Punch Out is a rather limited game, it's amazingly playable. As soon as you work out how to win more than one game the fun really begins. There's plenty of challenge in working out the tactics to beat each of the increasingly difficult opponents. It's this tactical gameplay which makes Punch Out so absorbing, and a little frustrating at times. Still, the best boxing game by far to grace any home machine. Could have done with a two-player mode, though.

MARK PATTERSON

GRAPHICS	90
SOUND	88
PLAYABILITY	88
VALUE	70

OVERALL

79

★ GAME BY NINTENDO ★ CONTACT NINTENDO (0392 822565) FOR INFORMATION

Over the last five years there have been dozens of computer and video games books – and some of them have even been quite good. But this one's different. It's more than just good, it's brilliant!

'Essential buy' is the phrase wethinks you're looking for. This Computer and Video Games year book is from top book publishers, Boxtree Limited, and it's chock-a-block with reviews and tips of the best games that money can buy, along with tons of useful addresses and a host of features on network games, virtual reality and Internet...

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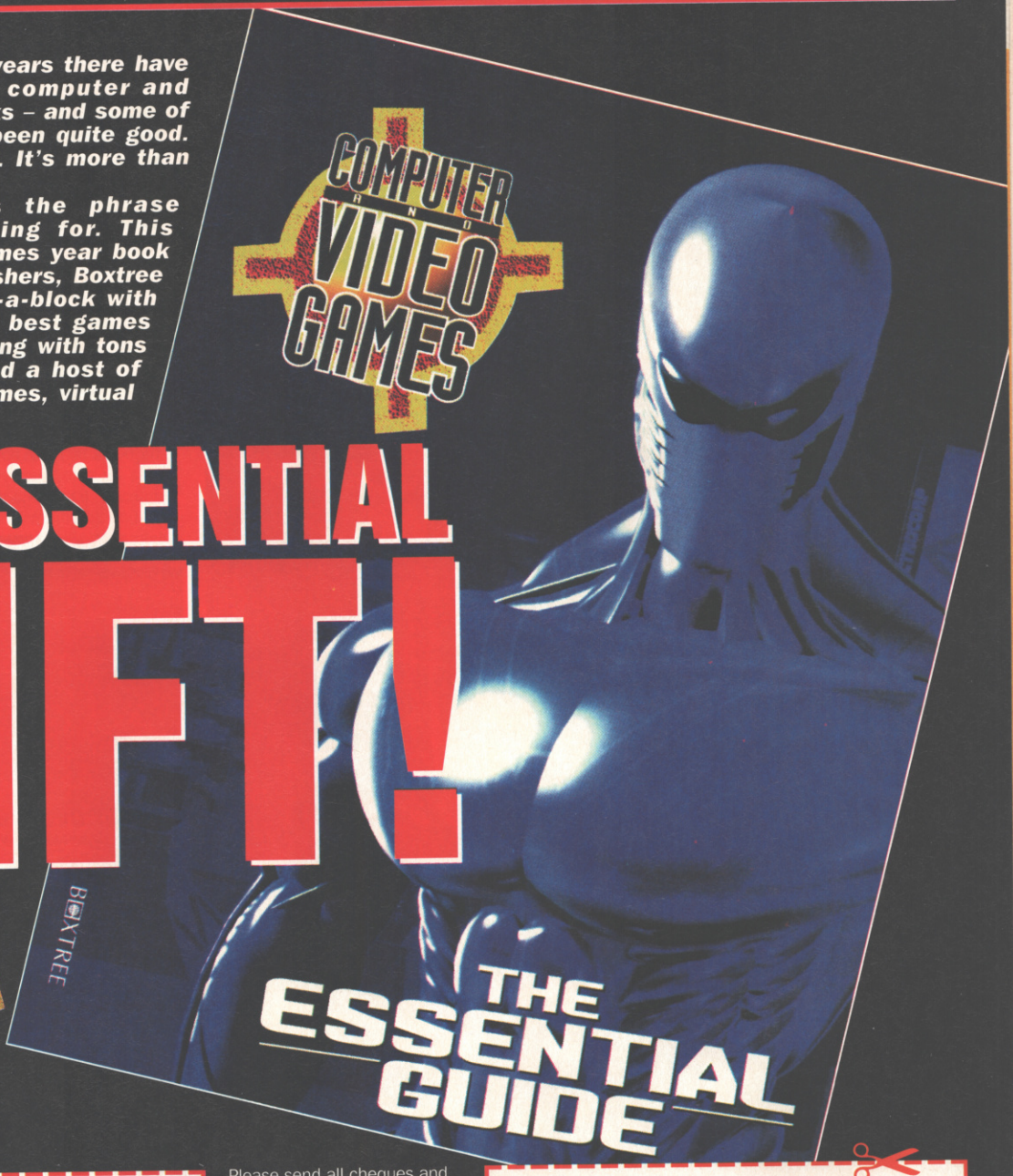

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DOOM VERSUS DOOM

MEGA DRIVE 32X AND JAGUAR™ HEAD-TO-HEAD

JAGUAR

▲ *Boom! Splatter! Now that's what we call videogaming.*

32X

▲ *Ha ha, my friend – I think... I think you are going to die!*

SPEEDIER SEGA

Sega owners may concievably be thinking 'Hey man – what's up with this 32X border sheet, homie?' upon looking at the screenshots here. Well, it's good news and bad news, really. Bad news first – you can't get rid of it and it does restrict the size of the play window. However, it does mean the game moves a lot faster than it would have otherwise, and it actually has the edge over the 64-bit Atari beast in this field!

32X

JAGUAR

JAGUAR/MEGADRIVE 32X

Shoot-'em-up ■ JAG Atari/32X SEGA
JAG£69.99 32X£59.99 ■ Out Now
PC version available
Ultra 64 version planned, 3DO version likely

So, in the battle of the hi-tech powerhouse consoles, just which one comes up to PC level?

A couple of months ago we said that there wasn't a lot left to be said about Doom that hadn't been said already. Well, that's even more true now thanks to the swine Patterson, but suffice to say that Doom is destined for a place in gaming history thanks to its subtle blend of death and gore. That's not all there is to it, of course. No, there's also a generous helping of maiming, murder, slaughter, rampaging demons and huge guns. Strangely, Doom is yet to garner the sort of tabloid notoriety peers such as the comparably tame Mortal Kombat have attracted, despite a (now banned) ad campaign for the sequel featuring a background of innards and offal. Despite this lack of adverse publicity (a great unit shifter), both versions have sold like you would not believe and have consequently been converted to two mighty next generation formats – Jaguar and 32X. Being big and clever, we decided to put the two through their paces head-to-head...

VS MODE

How do the two versions shape up? Here goes...

	32X	Jaguar
Graphic detail	7	7
Graphic speed	9	8
Visual effects	7	8
Levels	5	9
Gore	9	9
Sound	9	8
Controls	8	7
Total	54	56

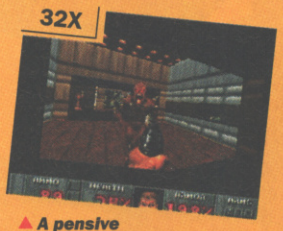
EXTRA JAG LEVELS

Hell must be a pretty big place when you think about it, what with all those lost souls needing beds, not to mention the purgatory wing, which must take up loads of space. Aiming for total realism, the designers of Doom have attributed a level to each department of Hades, from the front door to the computer department (which is full of BBC Micros as Hell's own would be). The Jaguar version, however, has more levels than even the PC original, having a few apparently lifted from the sequel and some all-new layouts to boot. The 32X, however has had its level quotient reduced to 17 – which, as hardened Doomsters will tell you, is still enough to challenge the hardiest gameplayers.

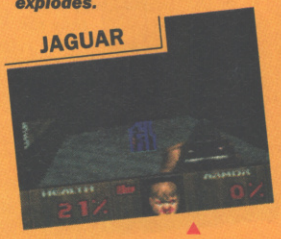
ATARI TWO-PLAYER

Whilst pegging around blasting the cahoolies out of evil demons and zombies is an awful lot of fun, and the computer-controlled enemies are highly intelligent, sometimes even this isn't enough. Lucky Jag owners, therefore, should be most pleased to hear the two-player modes of the PC game are fully intact. This means you can take a pal with you in your quest, or chase them around a single nasty-free zone in a head-to-head stylee, so long as you've got a Jag Cat multi-player and two copies of the game. And two Jaguars.

▲ Scare small siblings with shots such as these.



▲ A pensive moment before the gore explodes.



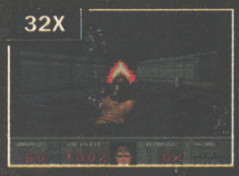
▲ Collect blue pass keys in this ace Doom conversion.

▲ Take time out to appreciate the death throes of your fallen enemies occasionally.

▲ Blasting at these fools with a passion. And, furthermore, look to Glock when it's time for some action, as the saying goes.

ONE MINUTE OF MAYHEM

Level three is where the action starts hotting up. Here's a minute of action from both just so you know how they shape up.



Die, ghost warriors!

Now pay for your sins!

More sacrifices! Ahaha!

Bandages – handy!

The slaughter continues.

More bandages – tidy!

Don't shoot that barrel...

Don't forget to kill!

...shoot the evil demon.

Sate that bloodlust!

This looks a bit risky.

Crush! Kill! Destroy!

Hurrah! A secret room!

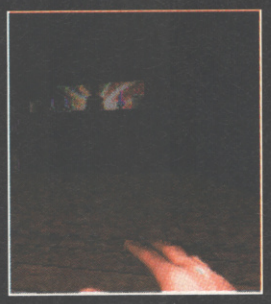
Blam! Kapow! Zing!

Hurrah! Death everywhere!

Hurrah! Death everywhere!

● CONTACT ATARI (0753 533344) OR SEGA (071 373 3000) FOR INFORMATION

DOOM VERSUS DOOM

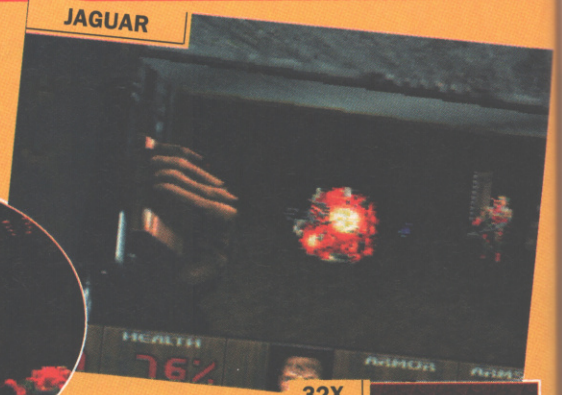


CHAINSAW IN THE AREA! LOVE, MAN!

Various pirate Doom levels are now in circulation, based on the original game engine but with revamped graphics. There's Alien Doom, Charlie Brown Doom and even, if you're a raver-type with thursday nights free, Megatripolis Doom set in the trendy club of the same name. It's got corpses hanging in the cloakroom and everything (in the game that is, not real life) and the aim of the game is to find a different way to interact with the environment other than by shooting everything (which would seem to take a lot of the fun away). You can have a go (it's free) if you want (and you're over 18 and have enough money to get in) by tripping down to Heaven by Charing Cross Station in London of a thursday and popping in to see the delectable Mr Martin Cavanagh in the Virtuali-Tea Room downstairs. But don't say we sent you.

Looks like this young fellow's time is up. Go on – put him out of his misery.

JAGUAR



32X

That exploding barrel is in the midst of blowing that thar room full of zombies to bits.

JAGUAR

One of the best things about Doom is the corpses stay where they die.

32X

More plasma-spattered play.

JAGUAR

Lovely.

32X

The power of the chaingun revealed.

JAGUAR

The shotgun revealed – again.

VERDICT

JAGUAR

It might not have quite the resolution of the PC version, but Jaguar Doom is a blimming incredible game. All the guns and injuries of the much-famed original are there, along with some never-before-seen levels to boot. There isn't much you can say about Doom, really. If the thought of wandering around an incredibly atmospheric and well-designed first-person afterlife blasting the shinola out of everything sounds good to you, buy this. In fact, buy this even if you don't like the idea. Just pips 32X because of the extra levels.

RAD AUTOMATIC

GRAPHICS	95
SOUND	90
PLAYABILITY	94
VALUE	94

OVERALL

95

ALTERNATIVE

JAGUAR

Alien V Predator

Atari/£59.99

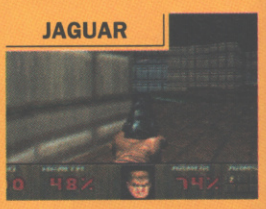
Despite the proliferarion of Doom-alikes released in the wake of the original (and best), this is still the only clone really worth playing – even if you own Doom.

ISSUE 156: 90%

32X

Shoot to kill! Shoot to kill!

JAGUAR



VERDICT

32X

It's rather more petite than the Jag and the graphics aren't so detailed, but all the playability you could want is still fully intact. Indeed, 32X Doom is slightly more challenging thanks to the faster game speed, and although the window frame may look a little off-putting you really don't notice it after a couple of minutes. It's £10 cheaper than the Jag version and, if you get a 32X for Christmas, you can use your voucher to get a further £10 off when you summarily buy this the very minute it comes out.

RAD AUTOMATIC

GRAPHICS	90
SOUND	92
PLAYABILITY	94
VALUE	96

OVERALL

94

get smart...

with a pocket-sized Walkman that packs a punch!

Mickey Mania meisters, Sony Electronic Publishing, is being a tad on the generous side this month with its Minidisc and multi-game Christmas giveaway.

● 1ST PRIZE

An ultra-compact, high-definition sound **Minidisc Walkman** worth **£349**.

● 2ND PRIZE

Five winners will walk away with the following:

- **Mickey Mania Mega-CD**, (Mega Drive or SNES),
  PLUS
- **Pitfall** (Mega Drive or SNES),
  PLUS
- **Mega Turrican** (Mega Drive), OR **Vortex** (SNES),
  PLUS
- **Mighty Max** (Mega Drive or SNES).

(Please state which format you require.)
Not forgetting runners-up who'll be getting a goodie bag each crammed with gifts to do with the games mentioned above.

YOUR THREE QUESTIONS ARE:

1) Name the first cartoon that Mickey Mouse appeared in.

2) Vortex is created by the team that brought you Starwing. Name that team.

3) Pitfall 2 features an adventurer from which of these ancient civilizations: Incan, Aztec or Mayan?

PS. You'll find clues in the relevant back issues of Computer And Video Games. Answers on a postcard or sealed envelope to Sony Minidisc compo, Computer And Video Games, EMAP Images, Priory Court, Farringdon Lane, London EC1R 3AU.

AND HERE'S WHAT WE SAID ABOUT THE GAMES

MICKEY MANIA

- SNES 88%
- MEGA DRIVE 90%
- November issue 156

'Destined to be one of this year's best platformers'
– Rik Skews

VORTEX

- SNES 89%
- October issue 155

'A complex game that's a very essential buy'
– Mark Patterson

PITFALL 2

- MEGA DRIVE 91%
- SNES 92%
- December issue 157

'This is a highly recommended purchase'
– Rad Automatic

● **RULES OF COMPETITION: Not open to employees or their relatives of EMAP Images or any of the Sony companies. The Editor's decision is final, no correspondence will be entered into.**

■ MEGA-CD

■ Racing Game ■ Core Design
■ £Unconfirmed ■ Out Now
■ No other versions available
■ CD-ROM, 32X AND Jaguar CD versions planned

bc racers

Speed and smash your way through the Jurassic era in the latest shiny disc wonder from Mega CD saviours Core Design...

Thunderhawk, Battlecorps, Soulstar. It seems that most of the decent software released over the last year or so on Sega's Mega CD has come from Derby-based Core Design. Its latest title isn't a shoot-'em-up like the above, instead it's a racing game, and it's what Sega must be hoping is its answer to the irrepressible SNES racing champ, Super Mario Kart.

Set in Flinstone-y times the story involves millionaire playboy Millstone Rockafella arranging a dirtbike race, the winner of which will receive the droolsome ultimate boulder-dash bike. The main challenger is caveman hunk Cliff Ace, who wants to win the superbike in order to impress top babe Roxy. All this translates into a prehistoric racing game with overtones of Bump 'n' Burn on the Amiga. Select six teams of two racers, each of which has its own strengths and weaknesses in areas such as speed and weapon power. Eight different tracks have to be completed and points are awarded according to finishing position. Various track-based and roadside obstacles attempt to slow the player down as do the racers who lash out. Thankfully you can do the same simply by tapping the A or C buttons to hit either left or right. Finish top of the league after the eight race and the gleaming ultimate boulder-dash bike is yours.

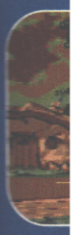
MEET THE GANG

B.C. Racers features 13 different competitors, seated two to a car. Look out for Chuck Rock and son Jnr and Gary Gritta and Brick Jagger from Core's Chuck Rock series. The last character, Stiggy Saurus, can't be selected for some reason.

CHUCK AND JNR

CLIFF AND ROXY

GA



▲ The night rally level is tricky with only the dirt-bike's spotlights providing illumination.

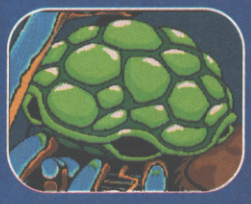
▲ Finish the race in the top three and you'll be treated to this Virtua Racing-style flyby. Corweee!

▲ Hit any button other than start to check up on a character's strengths before selecting him.

▲ B.C. Racers terrains tracks

ANOTHER FAB INTRO!

B.C. Racers' neat cartoon-style intro is definitely worth more than one look. It's similar to that seen in the Chuck Rock series but shorter and lacking the speech. It depicts the main prize and the characters scurring around as they prepare to race. Still, it doesn't make up for Core neglecting to use their best 3D graphics engine.



● CONTACT CORE DESIGN (0332 297797) FOR MORE INFORMATION

GARY AND BRICK

GRANITE AND TINA

BOB AND JIMI

SADO AND SID

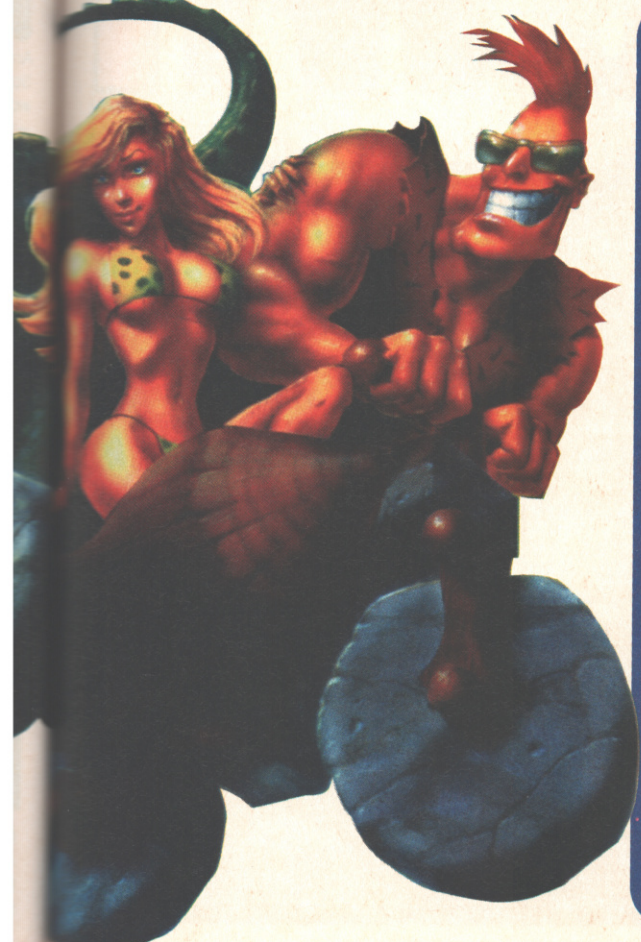
▲ *The power boulder at the bottom of the screen represents the player's energy. It gradually cracks open as damage is sustained. Find power-ups to repair it.*

▲ *B.C. Racers features eight different terrains to race around over eight different tracks and against 13 prehistoric competitors.*

▲ *The two-player mode is pretty limp. One player controls the direction of the dirtbike, the other the character's fighting movements.*

▼ *A limited supply of nitros are available for that handy match-winning speed boost. Hold the pad up and hit A to activate.*

▲ *Graphically B.C Racers is of a high standard but strangely no use has been made of the Mega CD's Mode 7 style hardware chip as in Thunderhawk and Battlecorps.*



VIRTUA RACERS

B.C Racers features a multi-view mode as seen in just about every racing game released since Virtua Racing. Two of the views are actually useful, which is more than can be said for some of those in Sega's arcade classic.

1. If you've got a six-button pad hit X and Z to change view, otherwise pause and move the joypad up and down.

2. The far view is useful for keeping an eye on upcoming dangers, though paradoxically it makes the dark level more difficult.

3. The standard close-up view. Gives perfect perspective on all levels. Other than for personal taste there's no reason to change it.

ALTERNATIVE

SNES

- Stunt Race FX
- Nintendo/£59.99

Classic cutie racing with humour and detailed graphics. A hoot for one-player, it's let down slightly by the small graphic windows and slowdown in the two-player game.

- ISSUE 153: 91%

VERDICT

MEGA-CD

After the excellence of Thunderhawk, Battlecorps and Soulstar perhaps I was expecting too much from B.C. Racers, but even so it's definitely something of a disappointment. At first glance it's difficult to suggest why it's so supremely average as graphically, sonically and control-wise it's up to scratch. There's a lack of speed in the game however, and little in the way of roadside or track obstacles. Unfortunately this ends up making B.C. Racers rather boring. shame, actually. Stick with one of Core's other faultless Mega CD titles.

RIK SKEWS

GRAPHICS	84
SOUND	83
PLAYABILITY	79
VALUE	73

OVERALL

78

■ PC

■ Flight Sim ■ Empire
■ £44.99 ■ Out Now
■ No other versions available
■ Amiga version planned

dawn

You've got a plane made of string and balsa wood, with a rubber band wind-up engine, and they expect you to fight the Red Baron... chocks away!

Put away your fire-and-forget missiles, your laser batteries, and your linked cannons. All you get in Dawn Patrol is a couple of machine-guns strapped to the front of your World War One aircraft, and your own cunning. Rowan Software has come up with a subtle twist on recent flight sims by returning to the roots of aviation. Added to the wingtip-to-wingtip exhilaration of flying a rickety old biplane in combat, the programmers have put in SVGA graphics that'll have you rushing for your goggles and flying jacket.

The look and feel are enhanced by having a unique set of options screens represented as a book of stories about the famous fliers of the time. You get to take on the more spectacular missions, from either the Allied or German side, starting in the thick of the action. None of this faffing around with take-offs and landings, no messing around for ages trying to find the enemy. Nosiree, Dawn Patrol is seat-of-the-pants stuff right from the off.

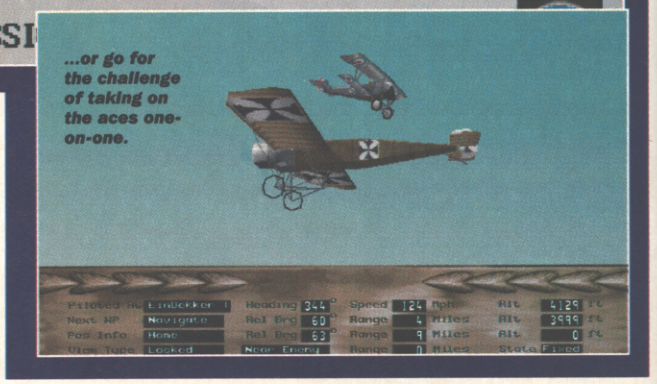
On the down side, this unorthodox approach to presentation means that Rowan has missed out a real campaign mode, and it is missed. Details like better sound and fuller ground detail might have helped raise some more eyebrows, too. As it is, with Origin putting its weight behind a WWI flight sim in the shape of Wings of Glory, it might end up being a close shoot out between the two to see who becomes the king of the Great War sims.

TWO'S COMPANY

In Dawn Patrol there are missions for everyone. Wade into multi-plane mayhem, all guns blazing...

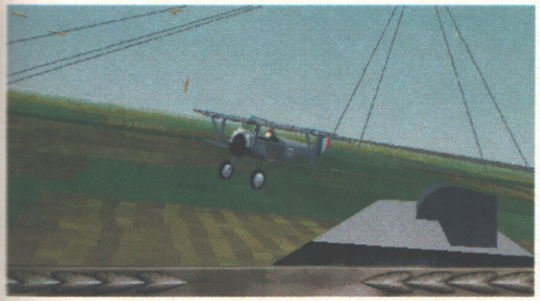
THE MISSI

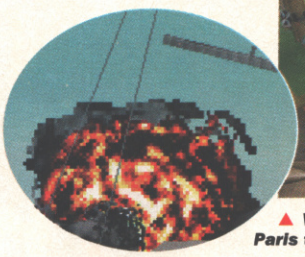
◄ *Having to fly close to your opponent, you always risk crashing into him instead of shooting him down.*



...or go for the challenge of taking on the aces one-on-one.

● GAME BY ROWAN SOFTWARE ● CONTACT EMPIRE (081-343 7337) FOR INFORMATION





If your manoeuvres are too fancy then your plane might simply break apart under the strain.

What'll be the next period piece sim for the PC ? The 1924 Paris to Monte Carlo rally perhaps?

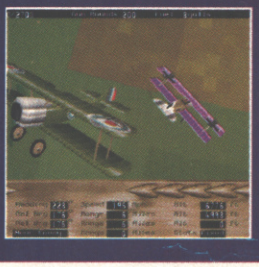
FIGHT THE GOOD FIGHT (WW1 RE-INACTED...)

A morning's patrol over the Somme, 1917. Flying with my wingman, I scan for enemy interlopers. There's something on the horizon.

Enemy at 10 o'clock, chaps! It's the purple baron, no less, and he's probably got chums of his own, too.

The Baron and his buddy take evasive action as I close in. Time for some fancy flying.

Climbing past the escort plane leaves just me and the baron locked in a one-on-one dogfight.



Eat lead, Fritz. Of course next time I'll probably make the good guys German and take my revenge.

patrol

If your dogfighting skill isn't up to scratch then you'll get shot down by enemy aircraft.

The skies are full of aircraft in your average piece of aeronautic argie-bargie, Dawn Patrol style. Worried about the flack and machine-gun fire from the ground? Your problems have only just begun.

SECOND OPINION

As soon as you try this in SVGA mode you'll know exactly why the games press wet its collective knickers during preview stage. Dawn Patrol is quite the dandiest-looking slice of aerial carnage I've seen for some time. Sumptious in fact. Rowan has taken pains to incorporate the right amount of detail and friendliness. And while it might not go down like a Fokker on fire with technical-minded flight sim buffs, myself I'll be coming back for more.

STEVE JAMES

COMING SOON

AMIGA

Dawn Patrol

Expect the same gameplay and style, although the graphics won't be of as high a quality or as smooth. Otherwise the two formats should be the same.

EXPECTED RELEASE CHRISTMAS

VERDICT

PC

This is half flight sim, half database, and both parts are enjoyable. With over 90 missions on offer you'll find plenty of action, and more than 160 pages of the 'book' give all the detail you could want on the First World War. The SVGA images are a graphical feast, if a little processor intensive, and the gameplay simple enough for anyone to get into. If only the sound was up to scratch and there was a true campaign option, then Dawn Patrol would be a great flight sim rather than the very good one it ends up being.

MARTIN KLIMES

GRAPHICS	91
SOUND	75
PLAYABILITY	86
VALUE	84

OVERALL

85

OTHER SVGA FLIGHT SIMS BY ROWAN ARE REACH FOR THE SKIES AND OVERLORD

SNES/GAME BOY

Pinball Game ■ **Gametek**
SNES £44.99 GB £Unconfirmed
Out Now/Out Now
■ Amiga, A1200, CD32, PC, CD-ROM versions available
■ No other versions planned

pinball fantasies

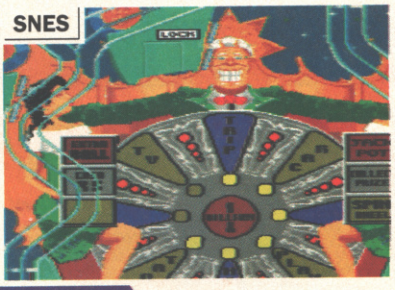
Gametek gets back on the silver ball trail with two more console conversions of 21st Century's Amiga smash hit...

Pinball Fantasies was the second in the series of highly rated Amiga-based pinball games following on from the original Pinball Dreams. The latest in the series, Pinball Illusions, has just been released and is currently being drooled over by the Amiga press.

The various titles have been converted to a whole host of machines, but none as yet have managed to capture the brilliance of the Amiga originals. Both these conversions feature all four tables from the Amiga game. Partyland is based around all the fun of the fair, Speed Devils has a race driving theme, Billion Dollar Game Show is a pastiche of tacky 50s quiz shows while Stones and Bones is similar to the Nightmare table in Pinball Dreams, with plenty of churchyard fun. There's certainly plenty of action on offer, the only thing really lacking is a multiball feature and that's since been rectified in Illusions.

Controls are dead simple. L and R tilt the table, Left pad moves left and A right.

SNES

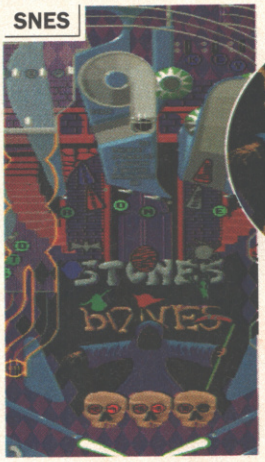


BALLZ

GAME BOY

The Game Boy version of Pinball Fantasies is thankfully much more faithful to the Amiga original. This is the Partyland table.

SNES



▲ *This is the Stones and Bones table which is similar to the Nightmare table in Pinball Dreams. Lots of ghosts and tombstone action.*

▼ *The SNES' Speed Devils table. Sadly the naff graphics, sound and playability stop any fun being gained from what was the best table in the Amiga original.*

SNES

ALTERNATIVE

MEGA DRIVE
■ **Psycho Pinball**
■ **Codemasters/£44.99**
Designed by the Micro Machines team this comprises silky smooth scrolling, neat graphics, sound and plenty of depth thanks to numerous hidden features.
■ **ISSUE 158: 89%**

VERDICT

SNES

Oh dear, Pinball Fantasies on SNES bears little relation to the excellent Amiga original. The most obvious bugbear is the simply appalling music and FX, I never thought I'd hear music worse than Alfred Chicken, but it looks like Fantasies has cracked it. The graphics look rough too, and although the scrolling is smoother than the SNES version of Dreams, it still judders. Gameplay is equally uneventful and very slow. An insult to the original; you'd be better of shovelling a few 10 pees in a table down your local arcade.

RIK SKEWS

GRAPHICS	64
SOUND	58
PLAYABILITY	62
VALUE	53

OVERALL **60**

VERDICT

GAME BOY

This is more like it. Obviously taking into consideration the limitations of the Game Boy this is still as good as I could have imagined it. The scrolling is pretty smooth and the music and FX are much higher quality than their SNES counterpart. Graphically it's quite sparse but very clear, which makes keeping track of the ball much easier when for example you're on the move. Not as much fun as Kirby's Pinball Land but if you're looking for pinball realism this is as good as it gets on Game Boy at present.

RIK SKEWS

GRAPHICS	82
SOUND	78
PLAYABILITY	80
VALUE	85

OVERALL **81**

● CONTACT GAMETEK (0753 553 445) FOR INFORMATION ● NO SUPER GAME BOY ENHANCEMENTS

■ 3DO

■ Platform ■ Studio 3DO
■ £44.99 ■ Out Now
■ Amiga version also available
■ No other versions planned

It's time for an old game on a new machine, and for one last time, it's 'footie', not 'soccer'!

soccer kid

Way back when Soccer Kid arrived on the Amiga, and the console gangs were more than happy with their Marios and Sonics, the Commodore aficianodos were well chuffed at having their own really good platformer. Like so many CD conversions, when it appeared on the CD32 it was little more than a portover which failed to live up to peoples' expectations. In fact, for your investment in a 32-Bit machine you got a game which was almost identical to the SNES conversion.

Now the 3DO has arrived, and there are plenty of excellent conversions, Road Rash, FIFA to a name but two, where the gameplay hasn't been touched, its just the graphics which really make it a 3DO game. And Soccer Kid hasn't been altered gameplay wise. It's the same game, where you have to rescue the Cup Final trophy from a load of aliens who've left the sum of its parts in various countries, which you must visit, using your football skills to recover the cup. And why not, I ask you...

▲ An FMV intro in a cartoon stylee courtesy of your 3DO player, sadly it's a bit poo.

▲ If you come across this famer you get a sample of a rather painful 'Get orff my land'. Delightful, I don't think.

▲ Here we are in Italy trying to retrieve a piece of the Cup, note the centurian.

Each ▶ level has a prerequisite number of soccer cards to collect.

◀ I believe 'On me 'ead son' is the customary saying.

▲ The sprite is easy enough to control, and as for his ball control, well...

AND YOU THOUGHT MACAULEY CULKIN WAS A LITTLE GIT

This version has been produced for the US market, so if you spent the entirety of the World Cup cringing at our Yankee cousins, then we suggest you won't enjoy its crappy slant on European footie.

OTHER VERSIONS

The Amiga verison was cool for the machine at the time. The SNES version had some nice Mode 7 bits and pieces which the 3DO version seems to have retained.

AMIGA
● ISSUE 142 ● 89%
SNES
● ISSUE 147 ● 87%
A1200
● ISSUE 148 ● 86%

VERDICT

3DO

And why not? Well because this is an average platform game which gamers have seen on other formats. If it had been sufficiently enhanced for a 32-bit machine that would almost warrant a purchase, but it hasn't. OK, there's an FMV intro, but it would almost be a crime not to put one on a 3DO game. The thing is it's on the naff side of, well naffness. There are some digitised backdrops, speech and sound effects, but if you've upgraded from a Mega Drive or SNES you'd be better off getting a decent platform game for that instead.

GARY LORD

■ GRAPHICS	69
■ SOUND	70
■ PLAYABILITY	72
■ VALUE	70

OVERALL ■ **69**

● GAME BY KRISALIS ● CONTACT FODOR WILEY (081-541 4082) FOR INFORMATION

■ AMIGA
■ Management sim ■ Gremlin Interactive
■ £25.99 ■ Out December
■ No other versions available
■ PC version planned

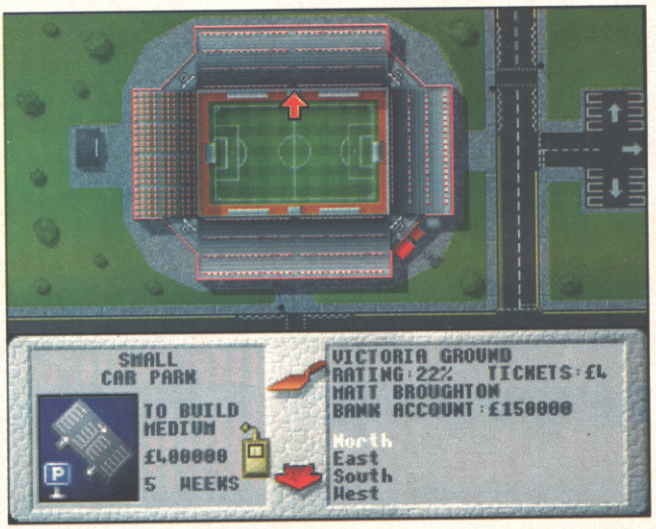
Never one to miss out on a 'sure thing' opportunity, Gremlin Interactive trundle out the grandson of all football management simulators, imaginatively titled...

premier

Though Amiga users have enjoyed such sequels as Heimdall 2 and Cannon Fodder 2, it's surprising how few titles make it to a No. 3. Of course, if any genre calls for the full 'trilogy' experience, it has to be football management simulation; with its ever changing team line-ups and player statistics. Gremlin's Premier Manager is about to cross that bridge known in the industry simply as '3'.

It seems as though Amiga owners can't get enough of footy management games, and even though there have been a fair few of them within the last 12 months, the additions to Gremlin's already proven Premier Manager formula should guarantee PM3 shifts like hot cakes. If it 'ain't broke, don't fix it' – Premier Manager 3 isn't that different from its predecessors. What Gremlin has done is make the already incredibly user-friendly control system even clearer, and to include a more detail tactics editor and an improved match display. Gone are the text-based management screens, replaced by high quality icons and player representations.

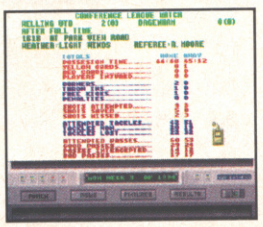
So it's now down to you to take some of the worst ever conference league teams to the heights of Premiership, not forgetting to balance the books, employ the finest coaches, keep an eye on the ground improvements, and even sell the board advertisements. Think you're up to the challenge? Then step this way the chairman wants a word with you...



◀ *It's not all buying players and planning tactics in Premier Manager 3; you've also got to think about your supporters, and the condition of your ground. As you start to make a profit from gate receipts, you can put some of that money back into things such as heated grounds, better parking facilities, and even a supporters club — complete with cheap beer. Probably.*

◀ *What better way to get your team, er... ship shape, than by getting involved in a few friendlies. Fairly obviously, you don't want to put yourself up against the likes of Manchester United until you've got your act together. Unless of course you're looking to get a good kicking that is.*

▲ *As the matches progress, particularly dramatic events are hi-lighted using spot graphic flashes such as this stunning save. All of these are supported by excellent samples of football commentators shouting such 'classics' as, 'Oh! What a tremendous save!' etc.*



▲ *What half decent manager would be caught without the latest in office equipment? Not me mate! With this I can keep up to date on all the latest fixtures, results and transfers.*

IT'S NOT ALL BORING STAT SCREENS YOU KNOW

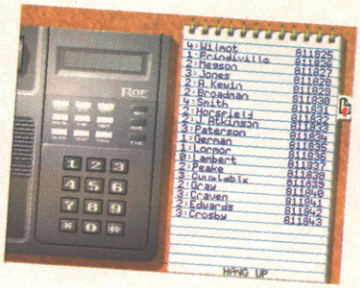
OK, a load of screens that look akin to BBC1 come 4.45pm Saturday afternoons isn't very exciting, so Gremlin have included these pretty pictures. How kind, don'cha think?

● GAME BY GREMLIN INTERACTIVE ● CONTACT GREMLIN (0742 753423) FOR INFORMATION

▲ GOOOOOAAAAALLLL!!

You ▶ can arrange your team in whatever formation you want, as well as set its aggression levels and playing style. A star rating system lets you know how effective your selection is.

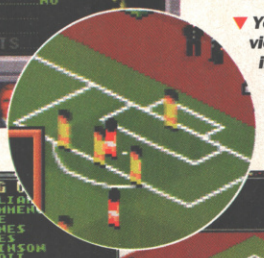
◀ You'd better get used to seeing this if you intend to play PM3 since it acts as your main control screen. From here you can access every area of the game, enter the detailed statistics database, and even choose to save and load previous game positions.



▲ You need to keep your ear to the ground if you want to succeed in PM3, and what better way to keep in touch than with your office phone. From here you can direct your coaches, utilise the physio, and even blag players on loan from other club managers.

manager 3

▲ Of course, at the end of the day, if the directors aren't happy, you won't last very long. This is the place to check on not only their confidence in you, but also on how the supporters think you're doing.



▼ You can choose how to view each match; selecting the speed of play, as well as watching either tiny players, the ball, or just players' numbers.

▲ Though your team get better as they progress, you can't beat getting a bit of new blood on the side.

▲ No football sim would be complete without a million statistics, and PM3 has 'em.

SECOND OPINION

Despite initially feeling a little disappointed that Gremlin hasn't done more with this sequel I soon found myself drawn into PM3. It's good meat-'n'-potatoes gaming: you know what you're getting and the additions, such as they exist, do make the game more accessible than its predecessors, although I'm not sure if I'd fork out £30 for this if I owned one of them. However, for those of you who don't this is a very reasonable intro to footie management sims.

STEVE JAMES

ALTERNATIVE

PC

■ On The Ball

■ Daze Marketing/£34.99

On The Ball takes the traditionally static screen-based genre and adds rewarding animated graphical treats. If you fancy a few visual fondant fancies with your text, look no further!

■ ISSUE 154: 90%

VERDICT

AMIGA

Premier Manager 3 certainly retains its reputation for user-friendliness, but with opposition such as On The Ball, maybe is in need of a bit of visual 'tarting up'. The game scores highly for its ease of control and speed of play, but loses a few points for perhaps neglecting to add enough features to be a major progression from PM2. If you're looking for a management game, this is certainly high up on the recommended list, but I'd suggest PM2 owners have a look before shelling out for much the same as before.

MATT BROUGHTON

■ GRAPHICS	82
■ SOUND	83
■ PLAYABILITY	86
■ VALUE	80

OVERALL ■

85

■ PC

■ Simulation ■ MicroProse
■ £49.99 ■ Out Now
■ No other versions available
■ PC CD-ROM version planned

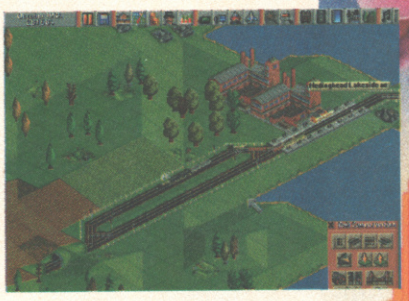
transport t

How do you make hauling coal to Newcastle fun? MicroProse's Transport Tycoon has the answer...

The idea in Transport Tycoon is to make as much cash by hauling goods, passengers and so on from A to B. Hardly sounds like thrilling stuff, does it? Funnily enough, it is. Plonked in the middle of a huge isometric 3D playing map, you're armed with a hefty £100,000 overdraft to start building your empire. How you cart stuff around is up to you, however it's going to be you who has to build the roads and the railways, the stations, the ports and the depots needed to get everything moving.

As well as towns dotted across the map, there are also all sorts of industries producing and demanding goods. All you have to do is figure a way to make a profit from them. If you don't, you'll go under, because at the same time as you're trying to cash in on one lucrative run so are up to seven other companies. Give it a couple of game years, and things get tough: the towns are huge, the industries are poring out goods, all sorts of stuff is being shuttled back and forth, and new vehicles like monorails and hovercraft are up for grabs - if you've got the cash.

To make life worse, disasters are likely to happen just when you least expect them. All the while, your miniature trains puff smoke as they struggle manfully up steep hills or through tunnels, the signal lights work, and lorries overtake buses and then break down. Sure, sometimes it does feel a bit pointless — like most sim games — and you start to think 'why the hell have I just spent the last four hours doing this for?', but it's so detailed and such a simple-but-complicated game that it's almost impossible to put down.



▲ *Unless you happen to have a liking for multiple train pile-ups, the first thing you have to figure out is how to get the signalling system working.*

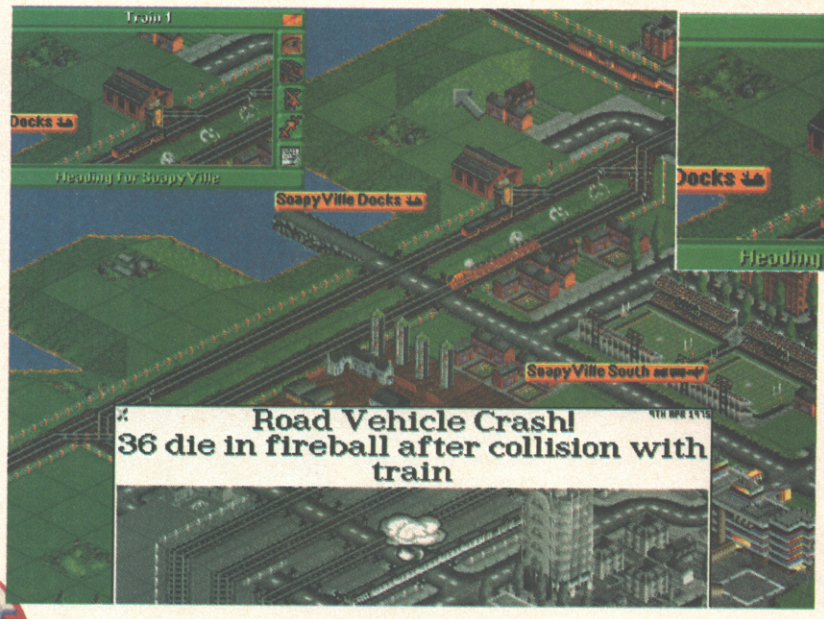
The playing map is totally huge. ▼

WHEN IT COMES TO INDUSTRIES, YOU'RE ALMOST SPOILT FOR CHOICE:

Farms for instance, produce livestock and grain. Factories accept livestock, grain and steel, and produce goods. Forests produce wood, which needs to make its way to a convenient sawmill to be turned into goods, and so on. The only trouble is they don't always produce the same amount, and sometimes they seem to go on strike, so it's no good relying on just one source of income.

● GAME BY CHRIS SAWYER ● CONTACT MICROPROSE (0454 326532) FOR INFORMATION

tycoon



▲ *Disasters work both ways. Sadly, my express train has just steamrollered one of my rival's buses. Oops.*

Up to seven different transport companies are at each other's throats at any one time. ▼

▲ *One of the best things about the game is how easy it is to control your fleet. You don't have to muck about for hours setting up loading details and so on in complicated menus, you can direct each one from a simple control window like the one here.*

ALTERNATIVE

SNES

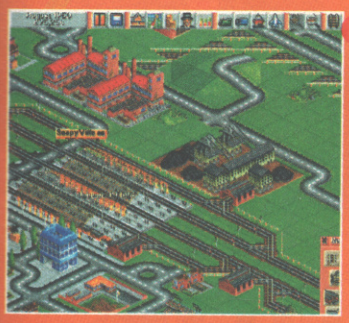
- Sim City
- Imagineer/£40

The definitive simulation game has you in charge of your very own metropolis, and its weeny inhabitants. The marvelous Sim City is the first decent sim for the Super Nintendo system.

- ISSUE 116: 93%

FAIR? WHAT'S FAIR?

Who says you have to play fair anyway? Transport Tycoon has a serial link and a modem option so it's easy to set it up for a two-player game against a friend on another computer. When that happens, you definitely want to win - and you don't have to do it by the book.



▲ *Protect your most profitable industries with diagonal tracks so that no-one else can get at them.*

▲ *Block their favourite routes with a spot of track and an old train like this. Totally pointless, but it gets the job done.*

▲ *If one of your opponents is using road vehicles a lot, then bribe the local city to do some road works. That'll screw up the traffic for at least six months.*

VERDICT

PC

Right now, there isn't a better looking sim around. This is superbly detailed isometric 3D, and it's unbearably cute to look at. Even Sim City 2000 has to take a back seat when it comes down to detail; everything in Transport Tycoon is beautifully animated and more alive. And it's as addictive as Sim City. You don't have to be a saddle to get hooked on it, either, because as well as being good looking (with all those steam trains and so on chuffin' about) Transport Tycoon is hell to beat. This is the ultimate sim on wheels!

JOHN BENNETT

GRAPHICS	97
SOUND	85
PLAYABILITY	94
VALUE	89

OVERALL

90

● CHRIS SAWYER HAS WORKED ON A NUMBER OF PROJECTS INCLUDING FRONTIER ELITE 2, GOAL AND CAMPAIGN, AND HE WROTE TRANSPORT TYCOON AFTER BEING INSPIRED BY SID MEIR'S CLASSIC, RAILROAD TYCOON

ARCADE

Beat-'em-up ■ **Sega**
£1 a go ■ **Out Now**
■ No other versions available
■ Saturn version planned

Sporting quite possibly the best graphics ever seen in a fully-playable arcade title, Virtua Fighter 2 looks set to take the arcades of the world by storm. But is it worth it?

Successor to the ground-breaking Virtua Racing, the original Virtua Fighter took the arcades by storm. Mixing the now famous and still incredible 3D polygon graphics, and all the combo-laden beat-'em-up brutality arcade goers had gotten used to since the rise and rise of Street Fighter 2 et al, the game easily justified the heftier-than-usual price tag per shot. Now Virtua Fighter 2 is just about ready for launch, and as per usual we were down to see it first.

Virtua Fighter 2 features all the original characters and moves from the first title, but with a number of new additions and even a couple of changes. Experts at Virtua Fighter 1 will no doubt be slightly disheartened to hear that the joystick commands for some moves have been changed. However, this isn't such a bad thing since it makes most combos more accessible and opens up the opportunity for a number of new sequences. The real changes, though, are in the graphics. The already stunning visuals have been updated still further to add an extra degree of realism, both in look and feel. One of the main complaints with the first game was that the punches never really seemed to connect, whether they actually did or not. With all-new Virtua 2 however, the character responses are incredibly tactile.

▲ It's a knockout! Aar, with the up and under (joke for old people).

▲ Loks like little Lion is in for something of a kicking at this point.

▲ Lion ducks and dives, wheel and deals in this fine shot.

▲ Aye sir, take thee this slap unto the fizzog. Ahahaha!

▲ Wahey! Pile on! Pile on! Bundle! (Bundle?)

▲ There's more polygons and there's some new characters, but what's to stop this from just being Virtua Fighter Champion Edition Turbo Plus, eh? Well, quite a bit as it happens. For starters the backgrounds have been completely revamped in a polygon stylee and some, including the majorly impressive raft level, even scroll around a set track as you fight.

virtua

MEET JOHN DOE (AND LION AND SHUN)

Along with all the regular Virtua Fighting folks you've come to know and love, Virtua 2 incorporates a couple of new chaps....

LION

He's a brash young martial artist with floppy hair who specialises in fast-paced strings of attacks and is the nearest Virtua equivalent to Ken or Ryu.

SHUN

Shun is an old codger who's three foot nothing, with a big, baldy slaphead and a long white beard. Shun is pretty hard for an alcoholic prune who looks like he's got his head on upside-down. Once you get used to his moves he turns out to be one of the better people in the game.

● GAME BY SEGA ● CONTACT SEGA (071-373 3000) FOR INFORMATION

▲ Select your characters with this amazing character-select screen. Full of characters to select it's an essential element of the game.

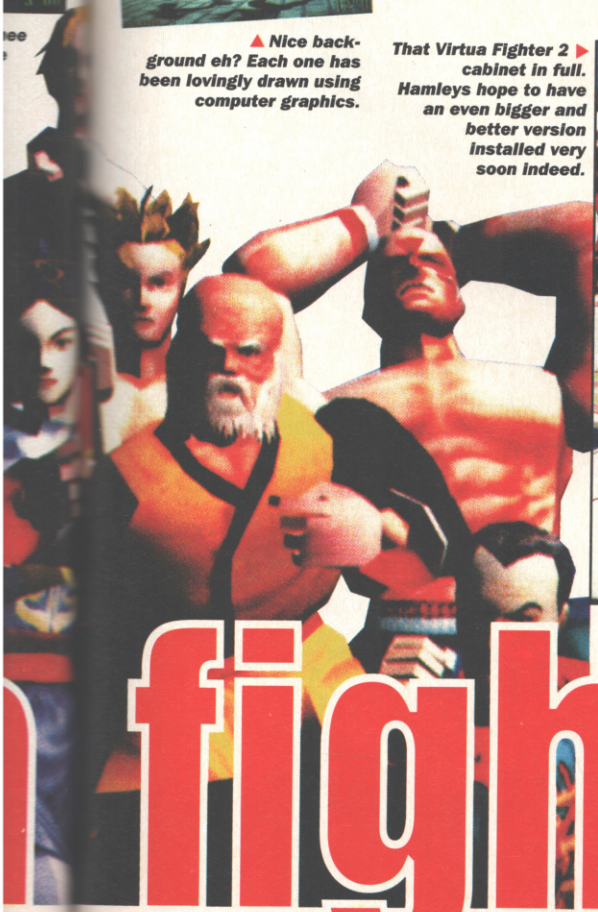
▲ Should you wish to play against a friend with the same character you'll notice your fighter has a completely different costume.

▲ Nice background eh? Each one has been lovingly drawn using computer graphics.

▲ The two new kids, Lion and Shun, battle it out on the impressive floating raft level yesterday.

▲ Use pain-inflicting attacks to cause damage to your opponents.

That Virtua Fighter 2 ▶ cabinet in full. Hamleys hope to have an even bigger and better version installed very soon indeed.



fighter2

COME ON THEN, YOU BIG GIRL

What really distances this from the prequel is the difficulty setting. The cabinet we played on was set on the lowest possible rating, yet no-one could get further than the fifth fight – even the truancy-hardened arcade vets that were there with us. Corkolina!

SECOND OPINION

The original Virtua Fighter coin-op guzzled more of my cash than my daily trips to the pie wholesalers, so I was looking forward to the sequel in no uncertain terms. I can't say I was at all disappointed when I finally got to play the thing – it's corking. True, I would have liked to see more new characters and I think the team may have missed an opportunity to add extra elelments to the basic gameplay, but this is still dead ace. Not a proper sequel, but ace.

MARK PATTERSON

THANKS TO

Much respect must surely go out to the Hamleys posseee on the Regent St, London turf who were incredibly helpful with the production of this review. Cheers Julian! Cheers Karena! And sorry we were late.

VERDICT

ARCADE

I'd seen shots of Virtua Fighter 2 and I thought they looked more than impressive, but I was even more amazed when I saw the game in full motion. The quality of the animation actually makes a difference to the gameplay. It's a lot easier to see what you're doing mid combat and you can certainly feel each blow when they connect and the character reels back. If you have any sense whatsoever you'll run to your nearest decent arcade (try Hamleys in London, we did) and play this a lot. And then some more.

RAD AUTOMATIC

GRAPHICS	99
SOUND	92
PLAYABILITY	95
VALUE	90

OVERALL

93

■ JAGUAR

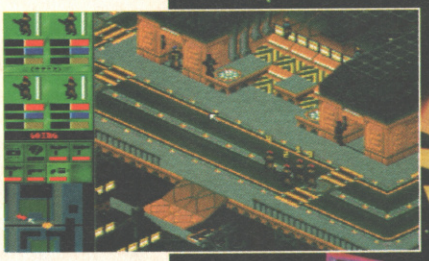
■ Strategy ■ Ocean
■ £54.99 ■ Out Now
■ PC, PC CD-ROM, Macintosh, SNES and Mega Drive versions available
■ No other versions planned

CVG HIT!

Hang out with your high-tech homiez-popping caps in da butts of the unrighteous with your hard-ass, drive-by Uzi-freak cyborgs. Erm, right...

syndicate

Some of the more infamous moments of British gun-lore tend to feature such incidents as the loner who's pushed too far, then pushes back at the first person he meets – or the copper who 'thought the safety was on' before blowing the top of some guy's head off. And with such incidents in mind, it's a wonder that Syndicate never, despite several attempts, struck a controversial chord with anyone.



The potential's still there. While the SNES and Mega Drive versions, whether through technical limitations, or higher forces are fronted with cartoon-like graphics, the Jaguar version is a bullet-by-bullet match to the PC original. Obviously with such small graphics, there's not much gore potential, but programmers Bullfrog succeeded in squeezing out every bloody drop while giving innocent bystanders more occupational hazards than a skinny dipper in a piranha pool. As well as a few more inventive, if less painful, ways to die.

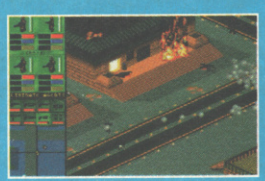
The object is to simply take your company to the top of the corporate table by killing or kidnapping execs from rival companies. It's a lot simpler than pretending they've been up to no good on the stock exchange, or with their secretaries. One day all businesses will be run this way, until then we just have to content ourselves with buying just enough shares to turn up at the AGM and heckle the director.

▲ *Always carry as many guns as you can. If you run low on ammo steal weapons from dead agents.*

▲ ***No matter how well prepared you are, there'll always come a time when you're outnumbered and outclassed by a rival Syndicate. In these situations it's often best to take the overhead walkways and set up an ambush for your smart-ass enemies.***

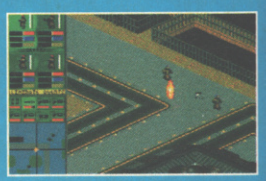
GREAT MOMENTS IN GAMING...

Ever been stuck in a queue on Old Biddies' Day at Sainsbury's, when the only check-out girls are trainees and it's not pension day for a week – hence loads of green coppers which have been lurking at the bottom of a giant Smirnoff bottle for a year? You have. Then wouldn't you just kill for some of these weapons?



▲ ***By this point in the game you've got the rocket launcher. It's big, it's bad and, by jingo, the police don't have them.***

▲ ***Watch the people line up. Imagine woolly hats on their heads, small brown purses in their hands. Think of the hairs on their chins. Then blow them up!***

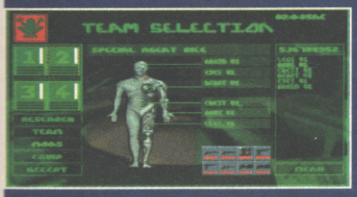


▲ ***Alternatively, do a clean job and vaporise individuals with the very devastating laser rifle.***

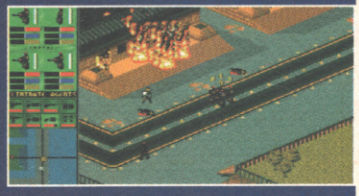
PULP FACTION

With the world now divided into into several syndicated chunks, certain companies have access to better technology than their rivals. This means bigger weapons and tougher cyborgs, so it's important that you stay ahead of the game and pour plenty of money into research.

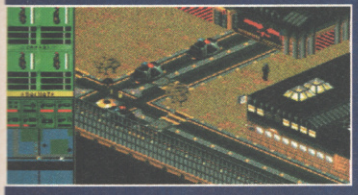
By the time you get to America, the enemy agents you encounter are kitted out with all the best weapons and body parts. The doughnut floating in the middle of the Atlantic is where the final battle takes place, as enemy agents from every syndicate join together to prevent you completing your goal of global conquest.



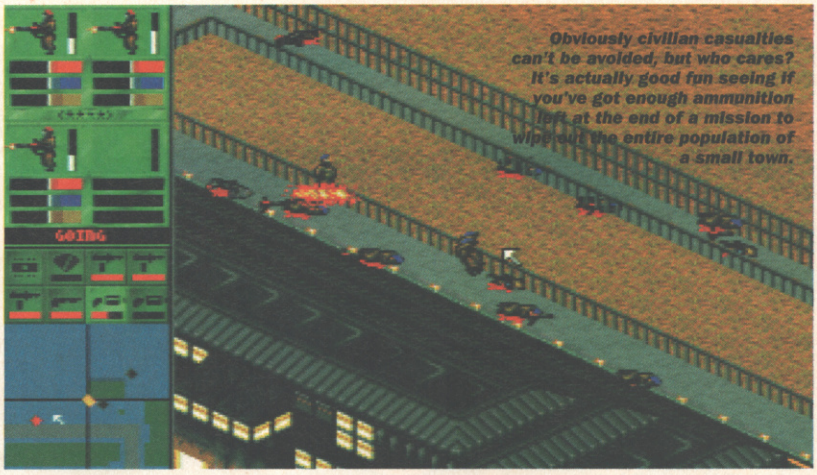
The only way that your cyborgs are going to survive the later missions is if you invest in some high-tech body parts for them. A new set of eyes will make the shoot accurate, while a state-of-the-art chest reduces damage and comes complete with a self-destruct mechanism.



And speaking of self destructing. When the going gets really tough and the odds are utterly against you exploding, one of your cyborgs will kill almost everyone on screen at that time. It doesn't really accomplish anything, but it's better than going out with a whimper.

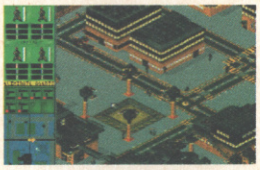


Caught in between warring syndicates are the boys in blue, the rozzers, the coppers, the pi-, well you get the idea. They'll shoot anyone who produces a weapon. Unfortunately for them they're not very well armed and tend to do nothing more than drive around a bit and get shot.



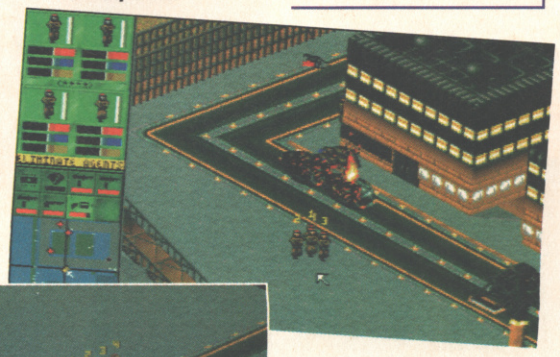
Obviously civilian casualties can't be avoided, but who cares? It's actually good fun seeing if you've got enough ammunition left at the end of a mission to wipe out the entire population of a small town.

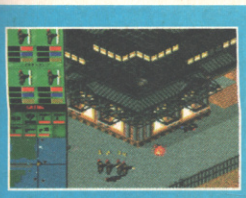
The close-up view is completely pointless. All it does is pixellate the graphics so you can't make out what's going on. ▼



▲ *Unlike the ridiculous close-up view, this distance shot let's you see any enemy agents in the area.*

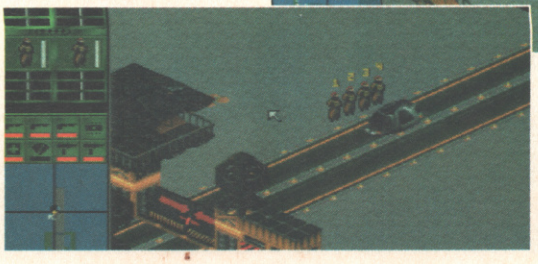
▼ *A sneaky way to kill enemy agents while saving bullets is to blast any nearby vehicles so they get caught in the explosion.*





▲ *Or perhaps you'd like to opt for a minigun? Guaranteed to fire wildly and take out everything but your intended target.*

▼ *Having your own car is great for running over pedestrians but you're in big trouble if you get shot at.*



SECOND OPINION

Compared to the 16-Bit versions, this is leagues ahead. It retains the dark, moody atmosphere of the original, although the new zoom features are tricky to use and, frankly, pointless. Using the Jag's over-complicated joypad takes some getting used to, especially if you've played the game before with a mouse. Along with Doom, this is one of the best games you can get for the Jag at the moment, and as for the violence – bloody great, isn't it?

GARY LORD

OTHER VERSIONS

The Amiga version was the first format that Syndicate appeared on and the subsequent versions haven't differed greatly. SNES and Mega Drive reviews are overleaf. (Turn that page!)

AMIGA
● ISSUE 141 ● 91%

SNES/MEGA DRIVE
● ISSUE 158 ● OVERLEAF

PC
● NOT PREVIOUSLY REVIEWED

VERDICT

JAGUAR

Jaguar Syndicate is a perfect conversion of the Amiga and PC originals, although, to my ear at least, some of the sound effects aren't quite as meaty as on the PC version. Still that's a very minor fault in an otherwise excellent game. Using the Jag's joypad takes some getting used to as the controls make full use of the telephone pad, but once you've got that cracked the game's just as playable as ever. Uncensored, unaltered and by far the best version of Bullfrog's Syndicate to hit any console.

MARK PATTERSON

GRAPHICS	75
SOUND	82
PLAYABILITY	91
VALUE	91

OVERALL

91

SNES/Mega Drive

Strategy ■ EA

SNES£44.99 MD£44.99

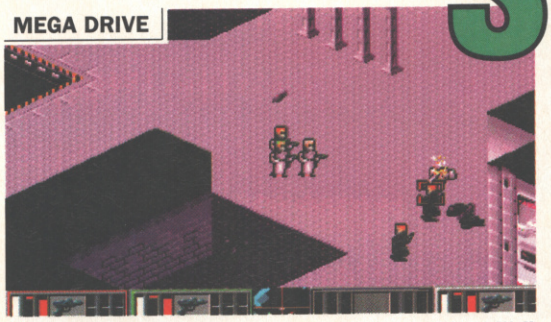
Out January

PC, Mac, Amiga versions available

Jaguar version planned

syndicate

MEGA DRIVE



▲ Targetting couldn't be easier — the computer selects. Well at least there's one simple control in the game.

CVG HIT!

Do cyberpunk gangsters dream of electric molls? One of the unanswered questions raised by the nightmare future vision in Bullfrog's Syndicate...

On the next century deregulation and the free market are taken to their extremes in a business environment that makes the current commercial activities of the Tory Party seem positively ethical. Across the globe, syndicates wield political power in the face of nation states by an effective mix of market monopoly and thuggery.

Futuristic press gangs abduct civilians, implant them with controlling processors, replace their limbs with cyborg components then send them out to assassinate, abduct and enforce any other elements of the syndicate's business plan.

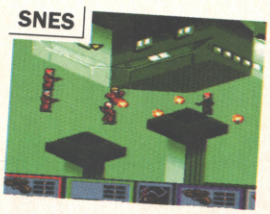
Bullfrog has shaped this warped prophesy into an atmospheric and involved strategy game, with a level of complexity above that of the average console game. The player coordinates 50 different covert operations, equipping his team and dispatching them via a RISK-style global map. The meat of the game takes place in the labyrinthine streets, with plenty of opportunity to wield an Uzi, drive a magnetic bubble car over the speed limit, and slaughter any unfortunate who gets in the way. Syndicate has already become Bullfrog's most successful game, by virtue of the floppy versions. These console conversions have been restyled, with simpler graphics and control system (dealing with the limitations of a joypad) and all missions have been redesigned.

MEGA DRIVE

◀ Grouping your men together inhibits tactics, but does focus firepower.

SNES

SNES



◀ The large grey mushroom was recently a security robot, before disagreeing with your gang.

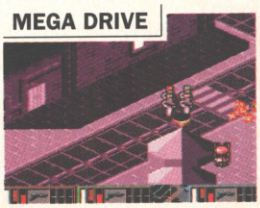
SNES

▲ Chris Evans fights a lone battle against three syndicateurs.

SNES

▲ Agent Limahl gets kitted out.

MEGA DRIVE



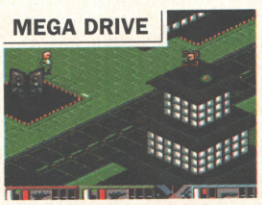
▲ Walking on the road is inadvisable.

SNES

▲ Everyone ends up as mincemeat.

◀ Shootouts like these ensure continual action

MEGA DRIVE



▲ An effective isometric rendering of a futurescape.

MEGA DRIVE

▲ A shot from the training mode: a chance to hone skills without actually injuring real civilians. Lumme.

VERDICT

MEGA DRIVE

yndicate demonstrates Bullfrog's surefootedness with console conversions and its strong bias towards gameplay over presentation. On first play it seems fiddly and overcomplicated, but perseverance really does reap rewards. You can barely swipe a Barclaycard between the SNES and Mega Drive versions, though both are slightly inferior, in my view, to the computer versions in both look and elements of style. But it brings an unexplored genre to the Mega Drive with panache, atmosphere and playability.

ANGUS SWAN

GRAPHICS	81
SOUND	76
PLAYABILITY	90
VALUE	91

OVERALL

90

MEGA DRIVE

▲ Negotiating the innards of buildings is tricky.

ALTERNATIVE

AMIGA

Dune 2

Virgin/£44.99

The same inspired mix of strategy and action, this time inspired by the Frank Herbert Dune novels. Slightly more immediate than Syndicate in play terms.

ISSUE 142: 89%

VERDICT

SNES

The missions and map layouts differ from the Mega Drive, but graphically it's a lot closer to the Sega format than the earlier floppy versions. Music and FX are better, but a delay between menu and in-game screens has annoyingly crept in. In common with most Bullfrog games, initial playing time is frustrating, with a zillion functions spread across the six buttons. But Syndicate suits the classic definition of a grower. Later levels are complex, massive and contain frequent surprises. The depth of a SNES RPG without the usual cloying sentiment.

ANGUS SWAN

GRAPHICS	84
SOUND	83
PLAYABILITY	90
VALUE	91

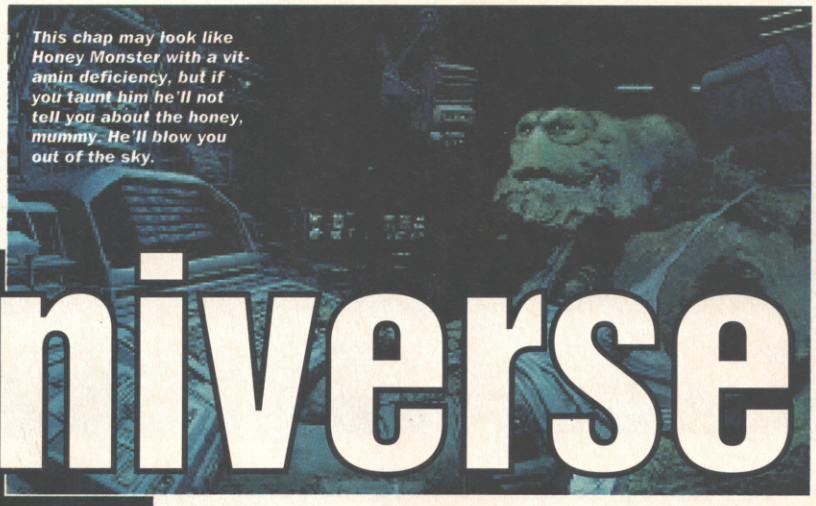
OVERALL

90

PC

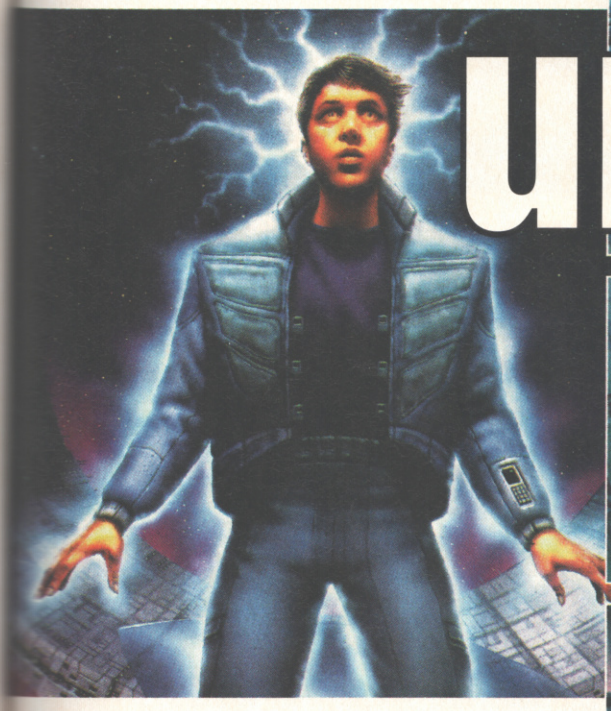
Adventure ■ **Core**
■ **£39.99** ■ **Out Now**
■ Amiga version also available
■ PC CD-ROM version planned

Matter and anti-matter – does it matter? Discover in Core's own not-so-small Universe...



This chap may look like Honey Monster with a vitamin deficiency, but if you taunt him he'll not tell you about the honey, mummy. He'll blow you out of the sky.

universe



▲ *It's the new Satsuma ZX64 Turbo, no passenger airbag though.*

▲ *To stop this happening to you, you've got to find a way to destroy those laser guns. Something to reflect upon... (that's a hint, by the way.)*

▲ *This planet's a bit barren. Rather like the game itself, it has to be said.*

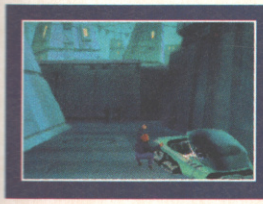
◀ *The 'story so far' is in digital book form.*

Point 'n' click graphic adventures aren't exactly new additions to the PC's game-style library. They are, however, relatively new to Core, whose futuristic crack at LucasArts' crown comes to PC after reasonable success on Amiga. So what's the difference between the two titles? Not a lot really, except that there's a damn sight fewer examples of this genre on Amiga than there are on PC, meaning that Universe has to go some way to be up there with the likes of Indy Fate Of Atlantis and Sam 'n' Max...

The story here is that you've been whisked to a parallel anti-matter universe, courtesy of a new time-travelling gizmo constructed by your Uncle George. Which wouldn't be so bad had you told him beforehand that you were taking the trip. Unfortunately, you didn't so it's up to you to find your own way back to Earth. However, unbeknownst to you, old George has figured out what's happened and has beamed himself to this new universe in search of his nephew. And on top of that, the alien rulers of this other dimension have noticed your intrusion into their territory and, believing you to be some big mythical saviour of the oppressed masses, are hot on your tail.

THE CAR'S THE STAR

Ah, but that's because the vehicle in Universe isn't any kind of car – it's a spaceship, too! Trouble is, it's got a smart bit of anti-theft kit installed, so what you've got to do is convince the owner of this silver dream machine to let you into her house, then nick the controlling computer attached to her suit and leap out of the upstairs window before the robot guards can get you. Easy as pie.



ALTERNATIVE

PC

■ **Sam 'n' Max Hit The The Road**
■ **US Gold/£42.99**
It doesn't have the same complexity of plot as, say, Monkey Island II, but it's still a damn sight better than most examples of this still-popular genre.
■ **ISSUE 146: 82%**

VERDICT

PC

Good graphics and atmospheric storylines aside, the most essential part of any adventure with aspirations of LucasArts-like success has to be an intelligent structure of action and reaction, so that what you're performing on-screen at least seems logical. Universe doesn't really hack it in this department – indeed, I was struggling at the start only to find that I had to perform a bizarre action. Oh yeah, there are moments too, which cause you to get stuck in walls and the like. Universe won't give LucasArts any sleepless nights.

PAUL RAND

■ GRAPHICS	72
■ SOUND	60
■ PLAYABILITY	55
■ VALUE	50

OVERALL ■

54

● GAME BY CORE ● CONTACT CORE (0332 297797) FOR INFORMATION ● SUPPLIED ON 5 DISKS

■ CD32
■ Driving ■ Acid Software
■ £29.99
■ Out Now
■ No other versions available
■ No other versions planned

Neither a paen to the Twyford Down tree-saving effort nor a celebration of the joys of running over rabbits, Roadkill is the latest effort from the Skidmarks team.

roadkill

Thanks to a twist of fate, the favoured sport of the future is an ultra-violent carnage-a-thon in which each participant dices with death in the hope of making a fortune. Who'd have guessed it, eh? That's a plot you don't hear often. Anyway, this violent future sport has a difference – it's in cars (a bit like in Death Race 2000) which speed around a hazard-laden track (à la Megarace) picking up power-up icons (not unlike those in Speedball). Of course, there are a number of other cars vying for the number one position and you'll have to get past them by hook or by crook (perhaps comparable to Rock 'n' Roll Racing at a push).

But hey, there's nothing new under the sun, right kids? What counts is that this ultra-violent future sports simulation is from the team responsible for the critically applauded Skidmarks. Adopting a Micro Machines-esque top-down view of the action and a similar clockwise/anticlockwise steering mechanism Roadkill pits you against eight tooled-up opponents, the destruction of whom is a sure-fire cash-spinner. Finish in the top three and you're through to the next round, lag behind and you lose one of your three lives (although the password system means you can usually restart only a couple of races behind where you died). And just in case this all seems a bit doomy and post-apocalyptically gloomy, just remember this little joke – how many Impressionist painters does it take to change a light bulb? Not Manet. A ha ha.

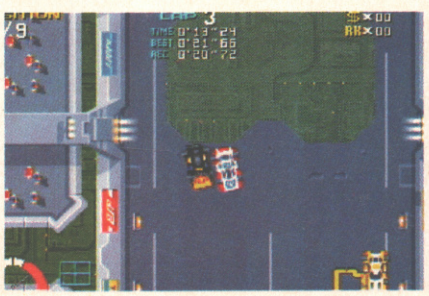
Take care driving through the Kill Zones, the CPU players are smart enough to use them too.

PUT A TANK IN YOUR TANK

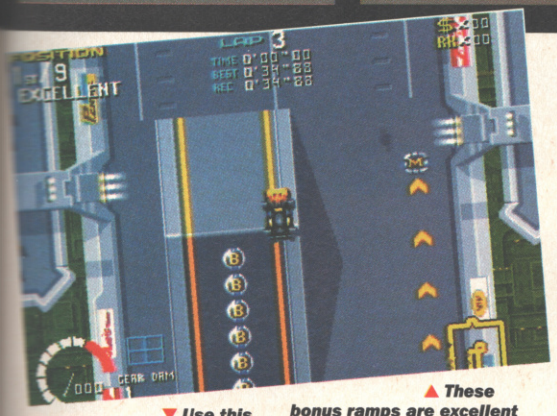
Roadkill presents the player with a choice of six different cars. Each vehicle has its own advantages and disadvantages vis-a-vis speed, acceleration, handling and armour considerations. The best all-rounder is probably the Cannon whilst the top motor for experts is undoubtedly the fast but harder to control Slam. Don't bother with the Demolition though, because it's almost impossible to steer.

Pick your car here, although you can't check what it's actually like until you start the race.

Most of the courses look quite samey, and they have these fabbie translucent bits too. Good, eh?

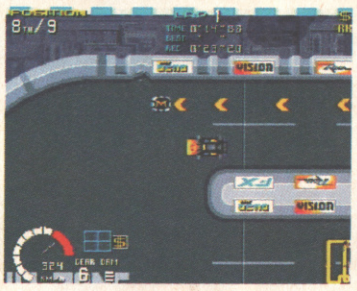


● GAME BY VISION SOFTWARE ● CONTACT ACID (01302 890000) FOR INFORMATION

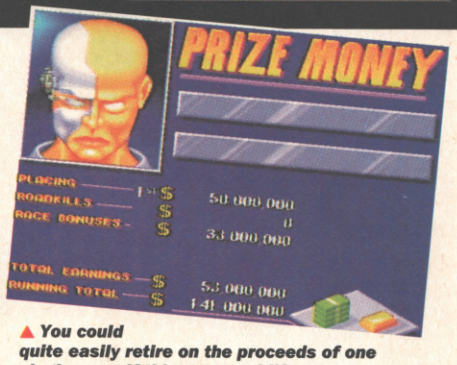


▼ Use this free run practice lap to get used to each course.

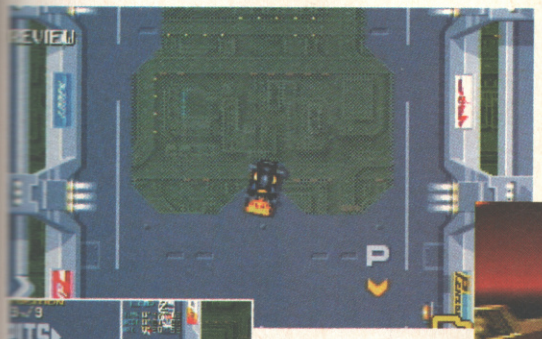
▲ These bonus ramps are excellent for picking up bonuses. And jumping off.



▲ Follow the little arrows to grab yourself a lovely power-up.



▲ You could quite easily retire on the proceeds of one single race. If this were real life.



▲ Hit the pits to repair your armour just before you're about to die.

Here's a surprise ▶ – it's a digitised cartoon-style intro! Wow!

SECOND OPINION

What the Antipodeans known as Acid Software seem to know about is gameplay, and although the team's games are pretty derivative (Roadkill is a mix of Micro Machines come Rock 'N' Roll Racers) they are also bloody good fun. There's not many decent games for the CD32, but this is certainly one of them, the courses are varied, the graphics smooth, the sounds moody and the appeal addictive.

GARY LORD

ALTERNATIVE

MEGA DRIVE

- **Micro Machines 2**
- **Codemasters/£44.99**

Not much in the way of death, but this is one of the best games ever written, and without doubt the best of its kind.

- **ISSUE 156: 94%**

VERDICT

CD32

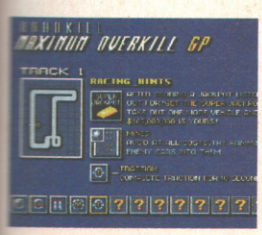
It's not bad, this Roadkill lark. Alright, so top-down death racers have been absolutely ten a penny since Badlands was released all those years ago, but Roadkill features a number of original elements, such as the funsome Kill Zones, which put it right there in front of the pack. There are a few downers however: your car spins around for waaay too long if you knock into anything for starters, but nothing which seriously affects Roadkill's goodness. Definitely worth a look for all you CD32 heads out there.

RAD AUTOMATIC

GRAPHICS	76
SOUND	78
PLAYABILITY	86
VALUE	82

OVERALL

80



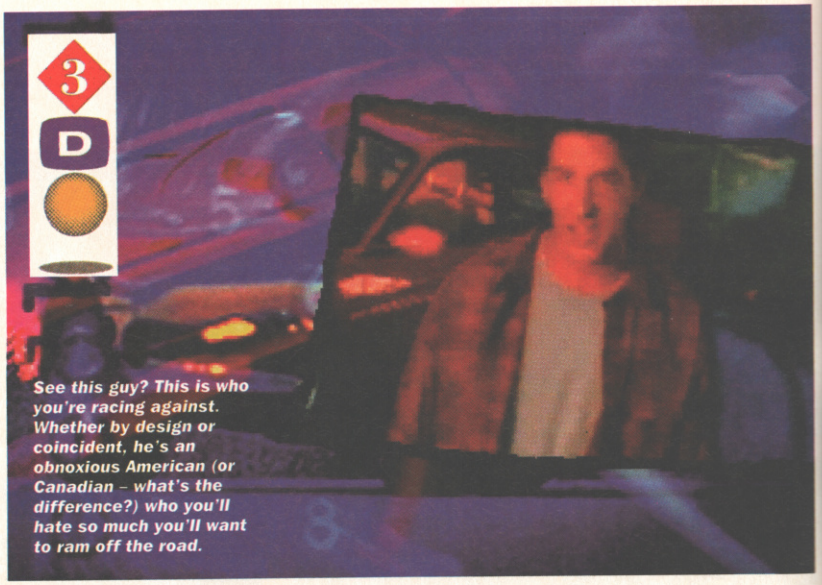
CRUSH KILL DESTROY

There are two ways of getting rid of your opponents, either pick up some guided missiles or ram your opponent into some spikes in a Kill Zone, trés butch.

■ 3DO

■ Arcade ■ Electronic Arts
■ £44.99 ■ Out Now
■ No other versions available
■ No other versions planned

It's quite possibly the finest driving game ever programmed and you'll only find it on 3DO. Maybe it's time to check your bank balance...



See this guy? This is who you're racing against. Whether by design or coincident, he's an obnoxious American (or Canadian – what's the difference?) who you'll hate so much you'll want to ram off the road.

the need for

Get all thoughts of nitros, door-mounted machine guns and James Bond spikes in your hub caps out of your head, this isn't an action sim – it's a proper driving simulation with proper cars, proper roads and proper multiple car pile-ups. Eight of the world's most famous on-the-road powerhouses are faithfully recreated right down to torque ratios and handling capabilities.

Of course, there wouldn't be much point in a game where the aim was to merely drive down to the shops and back. So there's plenty of genuinely spectacular crashes, testing courses and an intelligent computer opponent who always seems to be one step ahead of you at every turn. Still, what's stopping you nudging him off the road...

Need For Speed is packed chocka with excellent details, such as the way the shadow falls on the car and dashboard when you drive under a bridge.

Apart from pitfalls such as police and other drivers, how well you do in this game depends entirely on your driving abilities. Although there are two external views, ABS and traction control options, for the ultimate test you need to disable these, switch to manual gears and take to the driving seat then experience what it's like tearing up the highways and by-ways of north America without having to stop for gas. Sorry. Petrol.

CHIPS OFF THE OLD BLOCK

We're not the sort to advocate different methods of beating speed traps – we'll just take our tickets and send our licences off to have three points added without so much as frown. TNFS's programmers, however, have thoughtfully added radar detectors to all the cars in the game. The little gizmos bleep like crazy when a cop car approaches, leaving you three courses of action:

1) Slow down, and avoid being detected.

2) Move up to ramming speed and try to force the cop car off the road.

3) Reach for the button marked 'hyperspace' and do a runner.

I WON THE LOTTERY I DID

Now if you were unfortunate enough to have to meet Noel Edmonds let's hope it was 'cos you'd won the Lottery, and your first purchase would be one of these...

● GAME BY ELECTRONIC ARTS ● CONTACT ELECTRONIC ARTS (0753 549442) FOR INFORMATION

The result of failed engagement with a law enforcement officer is a ticket for speeding.

Overtaking at high speeds is fairly simple providing the road's straight enough and there's nothing coming the other way.

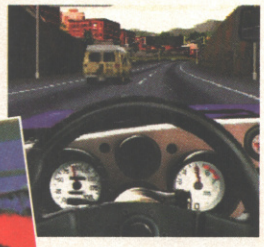
The other drivers are pretty pedestrian, so to speak. They don't care what you're up to as long as you don't get in their way.

speed

'BLACK ICE? WHERE?'

For all the programmers' good intentions when it came to making a realistic driving sim, there's still one fundamental thing which, for the wrong reasons, is one of the game's highlights – multiple head-on collisions. God knows how they managed it, but the crashes are the closest thing you get to piling the wrong way down the M25 in fifth. The resulting flips, rolls and impacts are like something out of one of those stuntmen shows they always put on at Easter. Naturally, you get to walk away, limbs intact, from every spill. It's just your no-claims bonus that goes to pot.

It's actually easier to play the game with the external views, but you don't get the same sensation of speed.



Each car comes with its own FMV advert, just to ram home the fact that you can't afford it.

"I was, doing 40 on the M11, when I'm overtaken by the Mystery Machine. Then they pulled in at a Little Chef never to be seen again."

SECOND OPINION

When I was nine-years-old the thing I wanted most was to be able to drive. If I'd been given a 3DO with The Need For Speed though, I would have been more than content until I got my driving licence. This is *the* most realistic racing sim, the cars are so lifelike it's unnerving when you hit something head on, and you really do hold your breath when you slip between two on-coming cars. 3DO salesmen – get ready for rush hour!

GARY LORD

Slam your car into reverse then throw it into first for excellent Starsky and Hutch wheel spins.

You can even read the writing on the road signs.

VERDICT

3DO

On seeing this game some one who shall remain nameless (Paul Davis off NMS) reckoned Need For Speed would benefit from 'copter chases and machine-guns. He doesn't have a driving licence. If he did, he'd realise this is the most true-to-life driving sim ever. It's no Sunday drive down the shops though, each of the eight high-performance motors offer a different challenge. From the point of view of someone who's only motoring experience comes from driving a turd brown 1.8 Triumph Dolomite, I loved every minute of this game.

MARK PATTERSON

GRAPHICS	96
SOUND	94
PLAYABILITY	95
VALUE	91

OVERALL

93

COMING SOON

PC

Nascar Racing/Virgin

This performance car race sim is looking as though it could end up as the premier PC driving sim. If you want to know more we should have the review next issue.

EXPECTED RELEASE DECEMBER/JANUARY

PC CD-ROM

Adventure ■ **Mindscape**
■ **£29.99** ■ **Out Now**
■ No other versions available
■ No other versions planned

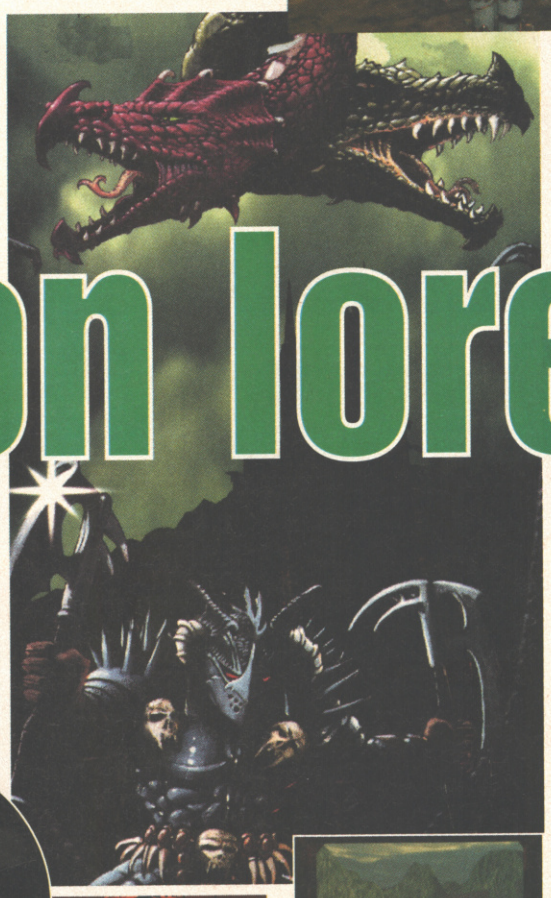
dragon lore

Is Dragon Lore a bore or will it leave you wanting more? We give Mindscape's spectacular CD-ROM graphic adventure the once over...

It's a bit of a bummer when, on your 18th birthday, the guy who you thought of as your dad tells you that he's not your dad at all, and that your real father was an important lord who was horribly murdered when you were still a baby. That's exactly what has happened to young Werner von Wallenrod, the unfortunately-named carrot-topped hero of Dragon Lore.

The bad guy of the piece is a red-eyed chap called Diakonov, and apparently he murdered Werner's father so that he could have more influence in the council. At the start of the game, Werner learns the truth from his foster father, and leaves on a quest to follow in his father's footsteps as a Dragon Knight (a brave warrior who rides a dragon into battle). Not only must he find the missing family dragon, but he also has to gain the approval of the other knights by performing tasks for them and finding his father's ceremonial armour. The reason you (you play Werner) need to indulge in these diplomatic shenanigans is to persuade most of the lairds to vote for you in your election. But not all of them agree: some will only support you if you prove to be intelligent and merciful, while the others want you to show toughness by killing as many monsters and people as poss. There are two possible endings depending on which option you go for, but only one will win you the game.

The good fairy will help you on your way, but watch out for her wicked twin sister. Nice, er, chest ornaments, eh?



▲ The rendered scenery looks really good, especially once you get inside Castle Wallenrod.

▲ He might look a bit on the thin side but he can still put up a good fight...

This unlikely pair will send you on a quest to kill a monster, but they'll give you something good in return.

▲ You don't have to fight this mutt – give him a bone.

VERDICT

PC CD-ROM

Dragon Lore is a gorgeous looking game, but it's let down by a few niggling problems. It's a flick-scroller like Eye of the Beholder rather than a smooth-scroller like Doom, so movement is restricted. The graphics are also inconsistent: the backgrounds look great but the character animation is unrealistic and the lip-synching is appalling. But the game is very atmospheric, and since it comes on two CDs, it's very big as well – you certainly get your money's worth. It's enjoyable enough, but it could have been better.

CAL JONES

GRAPHICS	85
SOUND	62
PLAYABILITY	74
VALUE	82

OVERALL

78

THE LUVVIES...

Your father Axel ruled a rather large castle but got himself killed while you were still a baby.

And this is the bad guy, Haagen von Diakonov. He did for your old man — but don't kill him if you want to win.

Your father saved you by giving you to a farmer who'll look after you until you inherit the castle.

And this is you, Werner von Wallenrod. At the start of the game the farmer tells you the awful truth about dad.

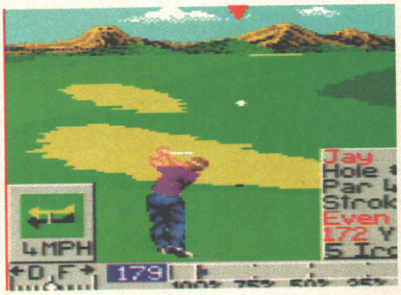
● GAME BY CRYO ● CONTACT MINDSCAPE (0444 236333) FOR INFORMATION

GAME GEAR

Sports ■ **Time Warner**
£unconfirmed ■ **Out Now**
Mega Drive and SNES versions available
No other versions planned

Get out of my way, I want to play some golf...

Now, thanks to the magic of portable gaming technology, you can play your favourite sport anywhere. At home, on the bus, even while strolling around the golf course. Those among you who also own a Mega Drive will doubtless be familiar with the PGA series. For those who don't, it's all



pga golf 2

very simple. You get the opportunity to play on some of the world's most famous courses using whatever clubs you fancy while pros offer useful advice. Hitting the ball is equally simple, although not always easy. A power meter at the bottom of the screen, stopped with a button press, dictates both the power and direction of the shot (if the meter goes past a certain point on the way up or back down the shot is curled in the corresponding direction). Sounds straightforward enough, but with the courses on offer the main game is anything but a pushover.

▲ *Oh I say, what a lovely shot old chap.*

▲ *Tip – hit the small one in the middle.*

What a nice, clean-looking chap! ▶

VERDICT

GAME GEAR

PGA suits the Game Gear perfectly. It doesn't need amazing graphics and the relaxed pace of play makes it ideal for playing on the move. By the same token, while PGA 2 is superbly playable it's not exactly pulsating with adrenalin-soaked excitement. Although thinking about it, anyone who buys a golf game for adrenalin-soaked excitement has something very wrong with their brain in the first place. Definitely worth putting on your Game Gear Christmas list (as long as you've already got Micro Machines).

RAD AUTOMATIC

GRAPHICS	74
SOUND	61
PLAYABILITY	90
VALUE	84

OVERALL

88

● **GAME BY TIME WARNER (0604 602800)**

ATTENTION
BIG
GAME
HUNTERS

■ 3DO

■ RPG ■ Mindscape
■ £44.99 ■ Out Now
■ No other versions available
■ No other versions planned

Dungeons & Dragons. Once the staple diet of all adventure-seekers, now overtaken by games like Doom. But what if you were to blend D&D and Doom? Hmm...

slayer

Slayer? A game about a rock band? Natch', you'd be able to be your fave member, be it Ragnar Searaven, warrior singer, or even Kenneth Tangleweed, gnome drummer. Oh hang. Ken Tangleweed? Sorry, he's the gnome guitarist with Slade. So there you have it. Slayer. A game in which you play Slade as they journey into the darkest catacombs battling foul hellspawn.

Anyone who's ever played Advanced D&D in the days before computer RPGs should be familiar with this game, because Slayer is an AD&D game without all the boring dice rolling and pencilwork. Another added bonus to AD&D on 3DO are the graphics. Obviously influenced by Doom, the programmers have created the dungeons out of texture-mapped 3D graphics. Although you can't really select from the band members of Slayer (or Slade), you can choose from a range of fighters, magic-users, thieves, and clerics, and they all come in a range of flavours from human, elf, dwarf and even gnome. If you don't like the selection, then make your own and come up with a suitably embarrassing D&D-style name. Radion Automatic for example.

NICE HOUSE, MATE

Typical. Your horse has broken down and there isn't a tavern for miles. Hang on though, there's a light in the distance...

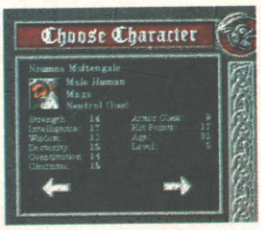
▲ Lonely troll, 352, seeks female companion. Preferably with no teeth.

Elvis! He lives! ▶ In mushroom form.

▲ And if I catch you scrumping apples from my garden again, there'll be trouble.

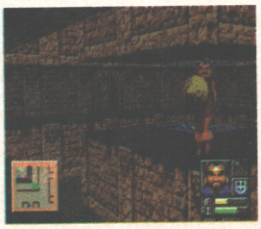
Bad enough that I'm an see-through spook, now I find out I'm bald too. Bloody great. ▼

▲ Can you identify the famous mushroom behind the ball?



▲ And the murderer is... Santa Claus? No, it can't be!

No ▶ mate, the sombrero and the boots just don't go together.



ALTERNATIVE

MEGA DRIVE 32X

■ Doom
■ Sega/£59.99

With 17 levels of blood-splattered mayhem, this game must rate as one of the greatest ever and check out the full review on page 72.

■ ISSUE: THIS ONE: 94%

VERDICT

3DO

I love Doom and I used to enjoy D&D, so Slayer should be right up my street, but it isn't because it fails to satisfy in anyway. Looking at it as a D&D game, it just doesn't have enough depth. Generating characters just to have them wander around an endless number of mazes is pointless. Even a D&D battle game that played like Doom would have been good, but this isn't even that. A lack of entertaining opponents and the almost non-contact fighting make this a poor cousin for Doom. Go and see Slade instead.

TOM GUISE

■ GRAPHICS	87
■ SOUND	82
■ PLAYABILITY	64
■ VALUE	52

OVERALL ■ 59

● GAME BY SSI ● CONTACT MINDSCAPE (0444 246333) FOR INFORMATION

A WALK ON THE WILD SIDE

PART 2: THE CHAOS CONTINUES

SONY ELECTRONIC PUBLISHING

ocean

DOLBY SURROUND™

GAME BOY

SUPER NINTENDO ENTERTAINMENT SYSTEM
PAL VERSION

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■ MEGA DRIVE ■ SNES
■ Shoot-'em-up ■ Virgin
■ £44.99/£49.99 ■ Out Now
■ AMIGA, CD32 and PC versions available
■ No other versions planned

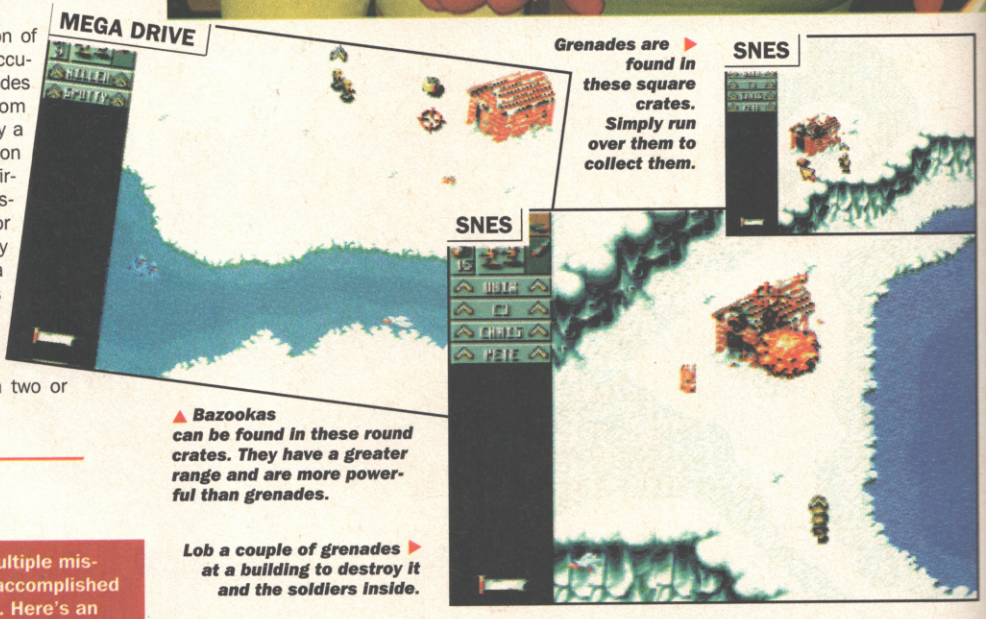
cannon f

Grit those teeth and chomp that cigar, the privates are back on parade for the latest console conversion from those Sensible Softie funsters!

Sensible Software has in its catalogue enough hits to turn even Cliff green with envy. From the dinosaur days of the Commodore 64 with stonking titles like Parallax and Wizball to modern classics like Sensible Soccer, everything the team puts its hands to hits the spot like a Patriot missile.

The latest title, Cannon Fodder, is an overhead shoot–'em-up similar in look and gameplay to The Chaos Engine. The idea is to guide a number of raw recruits through a variety of missions, many of which are multi–stage. The mission squad size varies, but tends to be four or five. Continued mission success results in promotions and this translates into the soldiers having higher weapon and grenade accuracy.

All missions require complete annihilation of the enemy soldiers and the buildings they occupy. Buildings can only be destroyed by grenades or bazookas which have to be collected from nearby. These pickups are easily destroyed by a stray bullet and this leads to plenty of tension as troops wander into enemy areas without firing in an attempt to collect them. Later missions require vehicles to be entered, either for easier travel or for destroying larger enemy buildings. Vehicles can also be destroyed by a stray bullet often meaning the only option is to start again. A tactical element is introduced by the ability to split the soldiers into separate units and in later missions this becomes essential as teams can attack on two or more fronts at once.



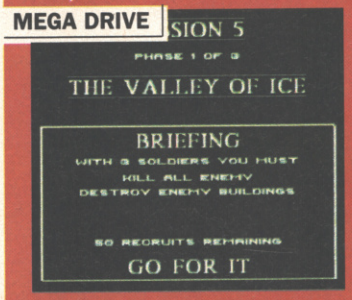
Grenades are found in these square crates. Simply run over them to collect them.

▲ Bazookas can be found in these round crates. They have a greater range and are more powerful than grenades.

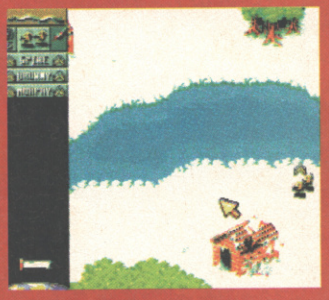
Lob a couple of grenades at a building to destroy it and the soldiers inside.

MISSION IMPOSSIBLE

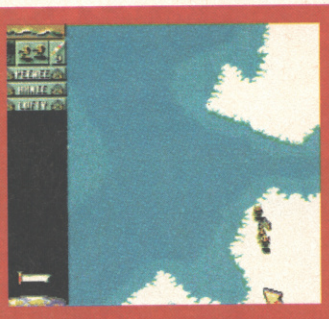
Many of the levels are broken up into multiple missions which all need to be successfully accomplished before the next level can be undertaken. Here's an example.



▲ Read the mission brief for clues. The title usually gives away what's going to be in store for that particular mission.



▲ The Valley of Ice: This mission is pretty straightforward, with no hidden surprises. Plenty of baddies to waste though.



▲ Bazooka Army: Quite a toughie this one. Find the bazookas to make wasting the enemy bazooka carriers easier.

▲ My Skidoo: Find the skidoo and climb in. Its speed makes avoiding enemy bazooka fire much easier.

● CONTACT VIRGIN (081 960 2255) FOR MORE INFORMATION.

fodder

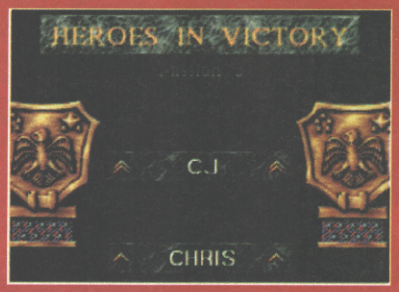
WAR IS STUPID

Cannon Fodder was criticised for being offensive to war veterans but for a shoot-'em-up it gives a pretty good example of the futility of war.

SNES

◀ *Dead soldiers spray blood and scream, they don't just flash and disappear as in most shoot-'em-ups.*

This screen comes up after every level to remind the player of heroes who've been killed. ▶



◀ *The home and away screen keeps track of casualties on both sides, filling the screen with tombstones.*

ALTERNATIVE

CD32

- The Chaos Engine
- Renegade/£29.99

A similar style of game but faster paced and much, MUCH harder. Features one of the most atmospheric pieces of game music too.

- ISSUE 151: 88%

MEGA DRIVE

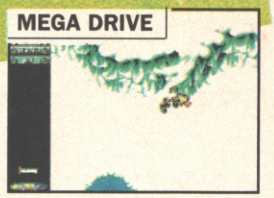
▲ *The arrow is pointing out a wounded enemy. Sometimes soldiers take more than one hit to kill.*

SNES

▲ *Various landscapes litter the levels and each have their own hazards. For instance the water slows the soldiers down and the quick sand drowns soldiers immediately.*

MEGA DRIVE

MEGA DRIVE



▲ *Every so often a bird or two flies overhead. They're quite distracting and it's easy to take a shot at one when the going's tense.*

SECOND OPINION

Cannon Fodder is an excellent strategy shoot-'em-up, and although it has a cute look and feel it's not without its blood and guts quotient. The style of the game is original and has that Sensible feel to it, and it's not just mindless shooting since there is a degree of thought required to fathom your way through each level. The graphics on the SNES version are slightly better, but there's not a lot of difference between the two versions. Let's go to war.

GARY LORD

VERDICT

MEGA DRIVE

This is an excellent conversion with the only differences being the slightly rougher graphics and lack of vocals on the title track. The mouse control has been transferred perfectly to joypad and is just as instinctive. Gameplay is a joy with plenty of variety, from simple blast fests to more tactical-based brain teasers. The difficulty curve is well set, but this isn't really a hard game as each level reveals a clear strategy after a couple of plays. Yet another classic for the Sensi team. We suggest you sign up immediately!

RIK SKEWS

- GRAPHICS 79
- SOUND 84
- PLAYABILITY 90
- VALUE 88

OVERALL

90

VERDICT

SNES

Much the same comments apply to the SNES version as on the Mega Drive, although the graphics are more faithful to the Amiga original and the sound is naturally better (still no vocals on the title tune though!). This is a brilliant game basically. I wish Sensible Software would release a crap game because I feel like I'm trying to get into their pants as they get so much praise from me! Cannon Fodder certainly isn't a crap game though, and it's as highly recommended as its Mega Drive brother. Get ready to leave the trenches.

RIK SKEWS

- GRAPHICS 80
- SOUND 86
- PLAYABILITY 90
- VALUE 87

OVERALL

90

AMIGA

■ Shoot-'em-up ■ Virgin
■ £29.99 ■ Out Now
■ No other versions available
■ No other versions planned at present but Mega Drive, SNES and PC versions likely

CVG HIT!

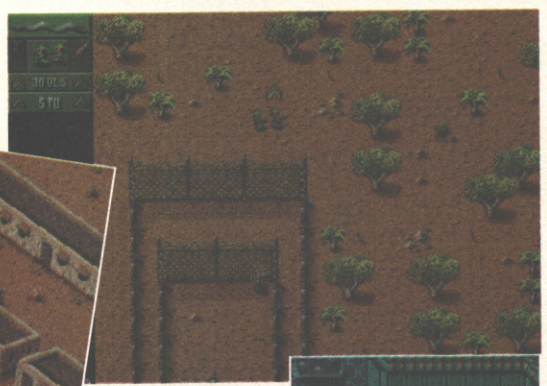
Frank, Tubby and the rest of the Cannon Fodder crew go once more into the breach, beach, desert and this time even outer space...

Most missions require all enemy soldiers and buildings to be wiped out, but there are some exceptions. On this level a switch needs activating before a spaceship will land and whisk the player's troops away.

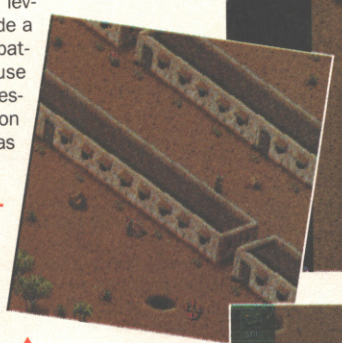
cannon fodder 2

Equip some Sensi Soccer sprites with big sod-off guns, dump them in the jungle and what do you get? Cannon Fodder that's what. Released a year ago, the top-down view shoot-'em-up was another smash hit for the Sensi team. A further 72 stages await you in Fodder 2, but the levels have far more variety and more Sensi weirdness than the original. This time round the game starts off in Beirut, but it's not long before the troops are whisked off by a spaceship to fight in an alien war. Despite being crack troopers they're not up to fighting aliens, and consequently they get sent back in time to hone their skills against medieval knights and 1930s gangsters.

It's certainly tough going but as in the first game limited supplies of grenades and bazookas can be picked up to aid the soldiers in their quest, while vehicles can be used for protection and speedy travel. The neat touch is that the 'vehicles' are context sensitive. So the medieval levels, for instance, offer the chance to ride a mechanical dragon and charge with battering rams. Cannon Fodder might use the same game engine as its predecessor but there are plenty of new ideas on offer. As the title screen says: 'War has only been this much fun once before'.



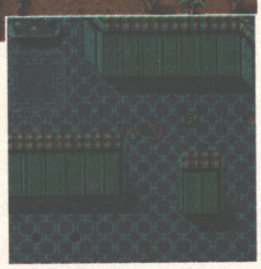
Here the only way to kill the guards behind the fence is to find some grenades and lob them in.



Cannon Fodder 2 starts off in Beirut and the levels here are like many in the first game. Later levels are more varied though.

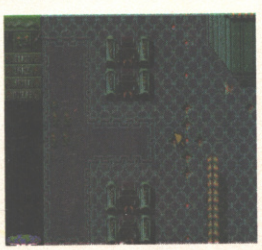
Enemies can be shot as long as wanted and each hit sends their bodies higher into the air. Tasteful huh?

Cannon Fodder 2 is a lot more open and less maze-like than its predecessor. The routes through a level are also less linear.

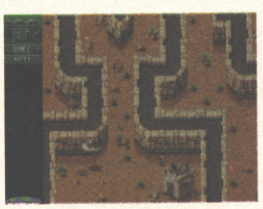


Aliens don't just appear from generators, they also leap out of these holes in the spaceship floor.

The game keeps a count of losses, how cheering don'tcha fink?



Whereas the first game featured squawking birds flying through the air, the space levels in Cannon Fodder 2 sport bulging eyes!



Cannon Fodder 2 is not for shoot-'em-up virgins since it's so tough.

VERDICT

AMIGA

This is better than the original thanks to more level variety and depth. Levels are a lot less maze like in structure while some are linked Tower Assault style. Graphically it's much the same, but sound has been beefed up with another amusing title tune and better quality FX. My only real complaint is that the loading times are sluggish, but overall this is another winning product from the Sensi crew. Be warned though, apart from Probotector on Mega Drive, Cannon Fodder 2 is the toughest game I've ever played.

RIK SKEWS

GRAPHICS	82
SOUND	89
PLAYABILITY	90
VALUE	88

OVERALL

90

ALTERNATIVE

SNES/MEGA DRIVE

■ Cannon Fodder
■ Virgin/£49.99/44.99

Just released, this is a brilliant conversion of the Amiga original with the intuitive mouse control faithfully converted to joypad and is reviewed on the previous page.

● GAME BY SENSIBLE SOFTWARE ● CONTACT VIRGIN (081-960 2255) FOR INFORMATION

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Which arcade conversion, officially licensed title or movie tie-in appealed to you the most in 1994?
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What was your favourite game of the year which DIDN'T rely on an official license?
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Think back... back! What was your absolute favourite game this year?
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6. SOFTWARE HOUSE OF THE YEAR
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As well as bestowing awards on the software houses and the games themselves, we can't forget some of the most important people in the industry - the people who program the games. Which individual or team do you rate as the best programmer(s) of the year?
10. BEST AD OF THE YEAR
A decent marketing campaign can be the make or break of a particular game or brand. Which advert in particular stood out for you? It could be a game ad, hardware ad - on TV, radio or in the games magazines.

PRIZE DRAW FORM

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supershorts

A fab new (ish) look for Super Shorts this month, but the same old name, I'm afraid. Never mind though, eh? Just read it.

snes
SAMURAI SHODOWN

Conversion of the much lauded Neo Geo beat-'em-up featuring an array of weapon-toting Japanese types. Dropping and picking up your side-arm in the midst of combat adds a new element to the ordinarily pretty exhausted one-on-one fighter format. Worth a look.

■ £TBC

snes
JOE & MAC 3

Latest in the series whose longevity defies belief – especially considering poor sales. If you're a cave fan you'll be pleased to hear the dino-based platform beat-'em-uppery has been supplemented by new projectile attacks and loads more levels. Otherwise, don't bother.

■ £TBC

pc
STAR CRUSADER

Right, let's get this out of the way at the start – this isn't as good as TIE Fighter. However, if you've completed it you may be interested in this. The graphics are very clever, but not that attractive, and the plot makes you want to get further ahead. For die-hards only, though.

■ £39.99

mega-cd
EYE OF THE BEHOLDER

Icon controls make this role playing game a piece of cake to get into, but the hugeness of the adventure and the rock puzzles mean it's a lot harder to get out of. Not quite up there with Snatcher, but without doubt a highly ace role-player for all you role-playing types.

■ £49.99

amiga
CRYSTAL DRAGON

Graphically, this RPG looks a little dated, but the gameplay is right bang up to date. It's tough, so you'd better have a lot of patience before tackling the task, but the whole thing is as rewarding as it is taxing. Certainly one for cerebellum fans to take note of.

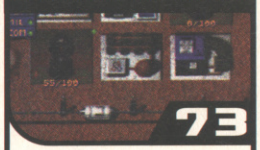
■ £29.99

snes
NHL '95

They just keep coming, these Electronic Arts sports updates. Here's another one for all you ice hockey aficionados who've missed out on your four or ten previous opportunities to pick up a conversion of your fave sport. It's not bad, if you're interested – but you probably won't be.

■ £TBC

pc
ALIEN LEGACY



Game where you've got to wander around building stuff and picking up some other stuff, according to the rather undernourished manual. The game itself isn't bad, but it's very confused. There are better games of this ilk already available, and you probably have one already.

■ £39.99

amiga
FIELDS OF GLORY

Indulge in the ultra-British pastime of French bashing with this Napoleonic-era wargame. While it's possible to pull off some incredibly deep strategies it's actually possible to win just by wading straight in. You won't get the most out of this unless you try hard.

■ £34.99

game boy
TARZAN

A Game Boy platformer – oh be still my beating heart. This one's got some good ideas, but the object-hunting basis of the gameplay is undermined by the time limits which render it technically impossible to collect all the objects without losing a life. Get Kirby or Wario instead.

■ £TBC

snes
MADDEN '95

It's surprising how many SNES owners don't own a Madden game, despite there being about 400 billion versions. You can tell Christmas is just around the corner, because here's the latest installment. Brilliant if you don't own a prequel, pointless if you do.

■ £49.99

pc
THE CLUE

Play as a dirty, filthy thief in this Austrian adventure set in a hilariously stereotyped cod-London. Visit the Fat Man Pub! Steal their loot! Buy an oxy-acetylene torch and do it all over again! Absolutely brilliant, although the graphics and interface are both very off-putting.

■ £34.99

mega drive
PSYCHO PINBALL

Pinball games. Love 'em or hate 'em, you probably hate 'em. This one, however, actually fulfils the claims of the software house and is the most realistic conversion of the game to date. Four tables, loads of sub-games and plenty of steel-springing excitement. Brilliant.

■ £44.99

mega-cd
MICKEY MANIA CD

Platform frolics hit the CD add-on once again thanks to those wily folks at Disney and Sony. The graphics are superb and some of the in-level ideas are quite novel. However, the pace of the game is rather slow, which can be extremely irritating. Not Earthworm Jim.

■ £TBA

pc
CYCLEMANIA

Schmimulation, that's Cyclemania's attitude to 'traditional' PC gaming. This is a full-throttle arcade razzle-fest sporting lovely graphics. A little limited at only five tracks long, but great fun all the while. The best bike racing game on the PC so far, that's what we reckon.

■ £39.99

amiga
CORKERS COMPILATION

VFM compilation comprising Blob, skill game, Blastar, a no-frills blastathon, Cyberpunks, a kind of Kindergarten Chaos Engine and platformer Wonderdog, which was born to be a budget game. So perhaps they should have called it Underdog. Ha ha.

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out now...

Helping you see the wood for the trees is CVG's quick recap of some excellent software currently doing the rounds of a games store of your choice right now. Go get 'em...

carts

DONKEY KONG COUNTRY

SNES
issue 157
90%

Nintendo's 32-bit platformer for its 16-bit machine is an essential purchase as no SNES game is going to look better than this. And don't worry about the gameplay as the game is replete with all the necessary ingredients.

carts

DINO DINI'S SOCCER

MEGA DRIVE
issue 157
85%

If you have a Mega Drive, and you don't have a decent footie game, then this is the one to get. Admittedly the controls take a bit of getting used to but aside from this there's a multiplicity of moves and tactics that make this a joy to play.

pc

MAGIC CARPET

PC CD-ROM
issue 157
96%

What will be hailed as the PC game of the year is Bullfrog's magic Carpet. No business sims here though, this is an arcade blast of the highest order with masses and masses of detail, and looks like an absolute dream. Pentium recommended.

carts

RUGBY WORLD CUP

MEGA DRIVE
issue 157
91%

Great rugby computer games have not been aplenty, but that's all set to change with the advent of Rugby World Cup from those sports games aficionados EA Sports. Instinctive and incredibly realistic it hooks you in from the beginning.

carts

ALIEN VS PREDATOR

JAGUAR
issue 156
90%

What the Jaguar needs is an arcade Doom-style shoot-'em-up affair that has been programmed well, stylish sprites and enough firepower to blow any another new console game in to touch. And by chance that's just what Alien Vs Predator is.

pc

NOVASTORM

PC CD-ROM
issue 157
87%

A 3D shoot-'em-up on the PC that is akin to Rebel Assault, but it looks even better because of the rather top lookin' rendered backgrounds and spot fx. And a pounding soundtrack to boot. Without doubt one of the best PC shoot-'em-ups.

amiga

ZEE WOLF

A1200
issue 157
91%

Inspired by games of the ilk of Thrust, Desert Strike, Sub-Terrania et al this is as classy a tactical shoot-'em-up that you will come across. You take on the role of a futuristic mercenary who has a host of taxing missions to complete.

carts

PITFALL 2

MEGA DRIVE/SNES
issue 157
91%/92%

Cool platformers are just perfect for the SNES, and that is the (only slightly) better version here, but both are huge, sprawling, beautifully animated affairs based around a central sprite that is a joy to watch as he runs, crawls, swings and slides.

carts

VIRTUA RACING DELUXE

MEGA DRIVE 32X
issue 157
93%

One of the first titles to arrive for the Mega Drive 32X (and don't forget to use your £10 discount voucher included with the machine), and it not only plays like a dream but it's virtually arcade perfect. The two new cars add an extra element too.

cd

MAD DOG MCCREE

CD-I
issue 157
82%

If you enjoyed this in the arcades then you'll enjoy this shooterama, as the FMV is excellent as you go Wild West to root, toot and shoot all those varmint. V. pricey at £70 but nonetheless fun. A TV no smaller than 21-inches is recommended.

amiga

DREAMWEB

A1200
issue 157
86%

A tantalising graphic adventure that gets a bit lascivious, hence its 18-rating. Moody and atmospheric graphics add to the violence and the sinister plot of this top-down view game. Men in macs beware, however, the sex scenes are over-hyped.

carts

HEBEREKI'S POPOON

SNES
issue 157
91%

Another Tetris clone, but with an exciting two player mode that will have you and a friend battling over who can align the most Popoons – cute beans from the Mean Bean Machine. Furiously-paced, this is a real test of skill and strategy.

pc

ECSTATICA

PC CD ROM
issue 157
90%

An expensive month for PC owners with this and Magic Carpet. Ecstatica is an adventure game set in the year 928, and you have to contend with the likes of minotaurs. Similar, gameplay wise to Alone in the Dark, and it has graphics to die for.

carts

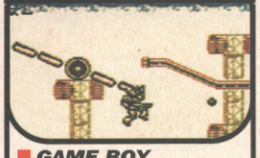
MICRO MACHINES 2

MEGA DRIVE
issue 156
94%

MM2 plays like the original, only with more vehicles and tougher tracks . No flash graphics, just solid gameplay and the most fun you can have with four people, a TV, a Mega Drive and a J-Cart Believe us we've tried everything else.

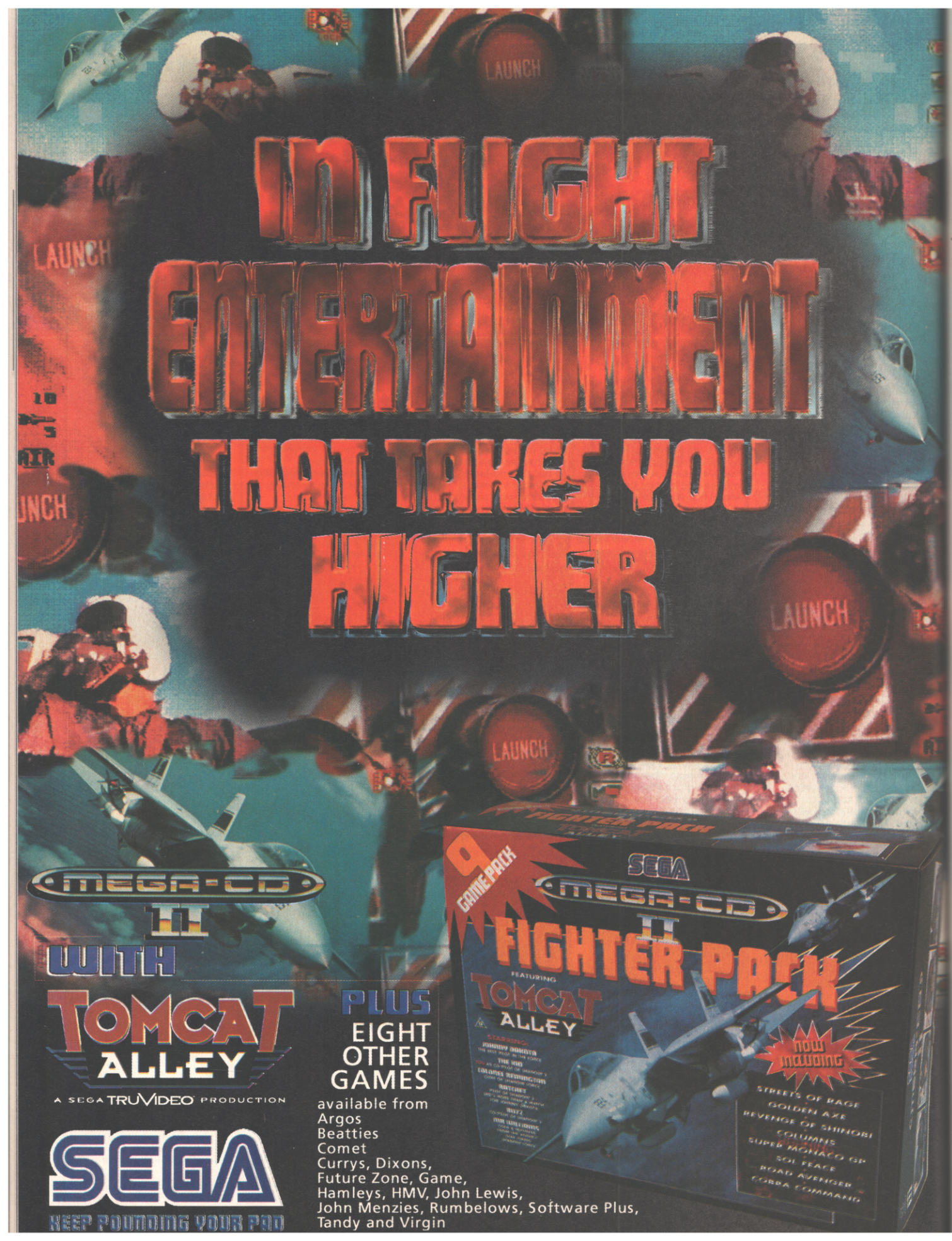
handheld

PROBOTECTOR



GAME BOY
issue 155
84%

Overhead and horizontal scrolling combined in one five level shoot-'em-up. You get some hefty hardware from level one that can be upgraded into something even heftier. Close to the SNES original but without a simultaneous two-player option.



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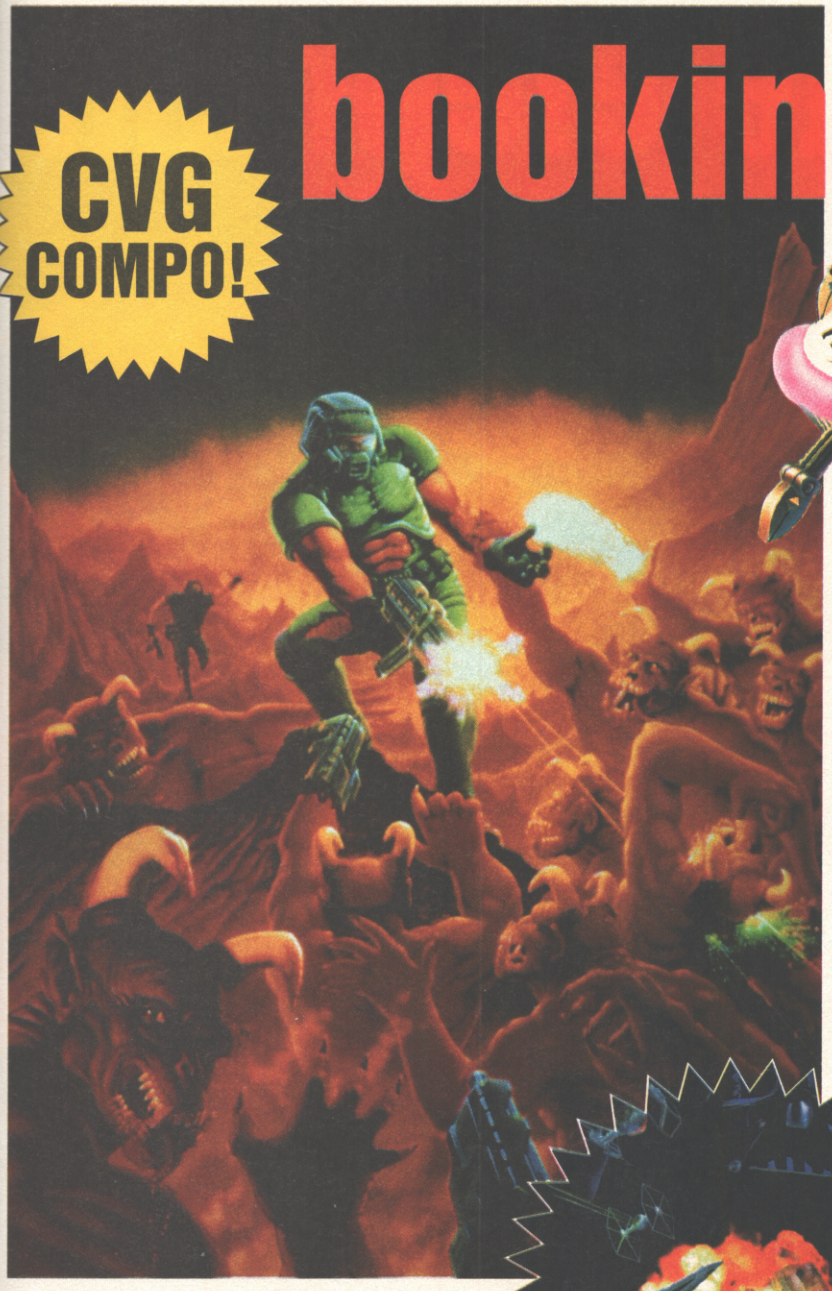
CVG COMPO!

booking out...



It's funny that, because booking out is exactly what your character does when it dies in a game. It books out of the little bit of silicon life it had and drops away into the bottom of your machine's case where it rots away into an itty-bitty pile of dust. And as whole civilisations perish in Sim City 2000, it probably explains why PCs are so dusty inside.

But you can prevent this needless slaughter with the aid of these handy game manuals from, well, Computer Manuals. Their comprehensive book list includes official guides to such gems as Sim City 2000, Under A Killing Moon, Myst, Doom 2 and Microsoft Space Simulator.

We're giving away four of each of the above books – so twenty winners will each be getting a book of their choice – and all you need to do to win one is answer the following questionette:

What does TIE (as in TIE Fighter) stand for?

There, that wasn't too hard a thing to do, was it now?

Send your answer on a postcard or stuck-down envelope to: Save A Sprite, CVG, Priory Court, 30-32 Farringdon Lane, London, EC1R 3AU. Entries should reach us no later than January 30th and please state which book you'd like 'cos we're only psychic on weekends and public holidays.

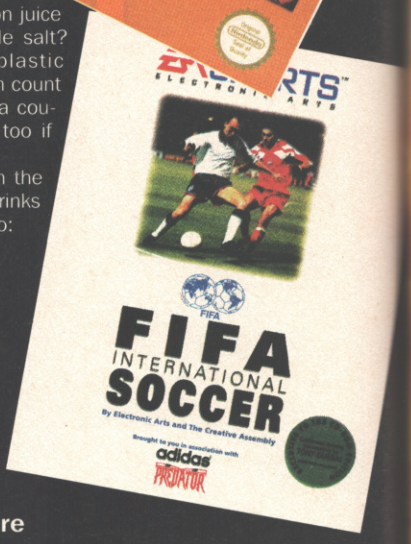
This competition isn't open to anyone on Lord Emap's payroll, or those who serve the company known as Computer Manuals. The ed's decision is final as he's not a nice guy and no cash alternative will be offered because we're skint.

the white elephant compo!

Being at the hub of everything games related, with the single format mags orbiting around us like flies around a particularly nice sticky bun, we collect all sorts of weird and wonderful cra... stuff throughout the year – and we're giving you a chance to win some of it!

Yes! Will it be the Moroccan fez brought back by an ex-editor? Or a half-full bottle of rancid onion juice and accompanying nicked-from-the-chippie table salt? Maybe it'll be one of Rad's unconvincing plastic dinosaurs – you just don't know. One thing you can count on, it won't be worth a bean... Alright, you'll win a couple of hundred quid's worth of decent software too if you state which system you own.

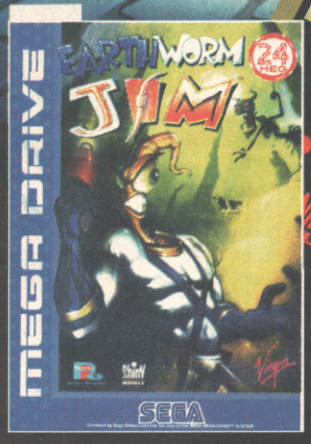
All you have to do is fill in the blanks to form the current contents of our Terence Piper™ Podule Drinks Vending System. So, pens at the ready, here we go:



1) Spr_ng Vege_able S_up
2) Co_fee
3) Powdere_ Mi_k
4) S_ger

And finish off this tie-breaker sentence:

I think powdered food substitutes are the way forward because...



Answers on a postcard or jar of instant coffee to:

Don't Even Suggest That our Soup Mugs Taste Of Athletes Foot!
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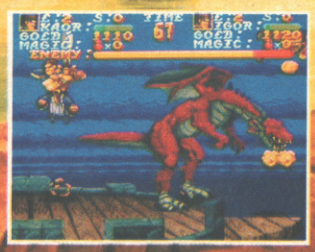
Any entries received after January 30th will be powdered and used as a new form of dehydrated kebab.

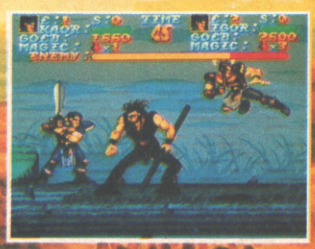
This competition is open to employees of Emap Images as most of the prizes will be stuff we've nicked from their desks. No cash alternative will be offered, though, as we're still skint.

● **Oh yeah, we think Terence Piper's™ soup is actually very lovely. And so his coffee. He's probably a very nice man really.**

Chaos Reigns

Legend





"This is a Big game, with Big impressive graphics and it's going to make a Big noise in the SNES market"

MEAN MACHINES

SONY ELECTRONIC PUBLISHING

SUPER NINTENDO ENTERTAINMENT SYSTEM

PAL VERSION

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If you're one of those wonderful early birds who buys us as soon as we come out, you could be in line for a wonderful £50 worth of gift vouchers to spend on any games you want. On the other hand, if you're reading this in January, shame on you for buying us late, but we'll let you enter the comp anyway because we're such nice joes.

Anyhow, all you have to do is answer the stunningly simple question below or if that's too difficult for you send us your reason for why we should give you our lovely gift vouchers.

And your question is...

What nationality is CVG's editorial director David Kelly?

a) Iranian
b) Tadjikistani
c) Welsh and proud of it

Answers on a comedy postcard, stuck down envelope or similarly flat postage device and it to:- Llannyddydlydil, CVG Wales, Priory Court, 30-32 Farringdon Land, London, EC1R 3AU.

No one who works for Emap Images, or is a member of David Kelly's family may enter. Entries must reach us by 30th January or they'll be tipped into a landfill in a green and pleasant land one of us calls home. No cash alternative will be offered because we've had it already.

BIG EDS

The editors of Britain's top games magazines tell us what games have molested their fancy this month...

Andy McVitie, Editor Nintendo Magazine System

The fact that I'm still playing Donkey Kong Country is a measure of the quality of the game. On the new side, Super Punch Out is one of those games that's so good it's actually a pleasure watching someone else play it. In the NMS office it'll soon be a spectator sport in its own right.

Steve Merrett, Editor Mean Machines

All praise the new king of consoles the Saturn is here! Virtua Fighter is quite simply the best game I have played this year, and office beatings are now more commonplace than coffee breaks. Apart from that... actually, that's a complete lie. Virtua Fighter is all we've been playing. Sorry.

Richard Leadbetter, Editor Sega Magazine

It's a bit glitchy in places, but there's no denying that there's only one true Next Generation game out now (to people willing to pay up to £800 for an import machine) – and that game is Virtua Fighter on Saturn. It's simply incredible, an audio-visual feast of unprecedented proportions.

Alan Dykes, Editor CU Amiga

If you're buying pressies for an Amigan consider these titles best buys: Mortal Kombat II, Cannon Fodder 2, Tower Assault, Jungle Strike, Zeewolf and Sim City 2000. Finally, in the interests of tradition, Ocean have announced that TFX will not be available this year. Again.

Andy Nuttal, Editor The One for Amiga Games

This month I've had the privilege of being the first Amiga journalist to preview Chaos Engine 2, and from what I've seen it's going to be excellent. On a more general note, it's good to see after a shakey spell, the Amiga is once again home to brilliant Xmas games. Hurrah!!!

David Upchurch, Editor PC Games

Tube. No I don't need a nasal decongestant, it's a game called Tube, which – and I've been allowed to indulge in a rare spot of Big Eds propaganda here – you'll only ever see on the next PC Games coverdisk. Seriously, it's a fast, fun, brill and by Bullfrog.

Christina Erskine, Editor PC Review

Last month I was raving about Ecstatica. This time round it's Wolf, from US Gold. It's really novel, you get to be a wolf, hunt, sleep, eat and do everything in a wolven fashion. I've also been using the Man United interactive CD; it's not a game but I still hope they'll do one for Crystal Palace.

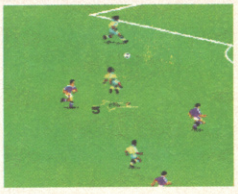
Steve James, Managing Editor Computer and Video Games

This month's biggie could be none other than the release of the Sega Saturn. I'm still reserving judgment as to how the machine shapes up long term, but Virtua Fighter is simply superb, a stunner of a game for a new system, as I'm sure I've said elsewhere this ish.

chart attack with HMV

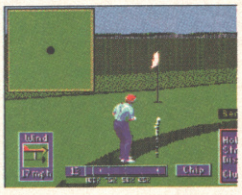
all format top 10

1 ✪ Fifa Soccer '95
EA ■ MD
While it's not a radical departure from the first game, Fifa '95 looks set to hold the number one slot just like the last game did. It's outselling



2 ✪ Donkey Kong Country
NINTENDO ■ SNES
Sharp visuals and some excellent, if not wholly original gameplay have made this the biggest game on SNES this

3 ✪ PGA Tour Golf 3 ■ EA ■ MD
Another hit sequel from EA, who have dominated the Mega Drive market while newer games such as Dynamite Heddy don't even make it into the top ten. Oh well, there's always next year.



4 ✪ Secret Of Mana
Nintendo ■ SNES
Mana is doing for adventure games now what Zelda did several years ago. It's one of the best games for the SNES this year and more playable than the monkey at number two.

5 ✪ Micro Machines 2
Codemasters ■ MD
The perfect cart for gamers who try to lead a social life. With built-in joypad adaptor, the four-player mode make this one of the best multi-player games ever.

6 ✪ Football Glory
Black Legend ■ Amiga
Commodore may be gone, but there are still 6,000,000 Amiga owners out there, plenty of whom seem to be lusting after this Sensible Soccer beater.

7 ✪ Ecstatica
Psygnosis ■ PC CD-ROM
If you think this brilliant CD adventure is a bit of all-right, wait until you see Psygnosis' Discworld. We reckon that's a hot tip for number one.

8 ✪ Mega Bomberman
Virgin ■ MD
It seems as though multi-player games are the big thing at the moment for Mega Drive owners. Who can blame them when they're this good.

9 ✪ Street Racer
Ubi Soft ■ SNES
Vivid Image have come up trumps with this Mario Kart topper. The four-player mode is exceptional and the whole thing's loaded with features.

10 ✪ Earthworm Jim
Virgin ■ MD/SNES
Most people's tip for the top has only just struggled into the top ten. A very good game in its own right, but perhaps people are getting fed up with platformers.

key ● non-mover ▲ move up ▼ move down ✪ new entry

HMV KNOW HMV KNOW GAMES

It's new release county this month as the new boys storm the charts knocking the established favourites into touch. Will they be back next month? How the heck should we know?

snes top 5

1	✪	Donkey Kong Country ■ Nintendo
2	✪	Secret Of Mana ■ Nintendo
3	✪	Street Racer ■ Ubi Soft
4	✪	Bomberman 2 ■ Virgin
5	▼	Stunt Race FX ■ Nintendo

gb top 5

1	●	Donkey Kong ■ Nintendo
2	▲	Power Rangers ■ Bandai
3	▼	Tetris 2 ■ Nintendo
4	▼	Warioland ■ Nintendo
5	▼	Probotector 2 ■ Konami

nes top 5

1	●	Tetris 2 ■ Nintendo
2	●	Kirby's Dreamland ■ Nintendo
3	●	Pacman ■ Nintendo
4	●	Micro Machines ■ Codemasters
5	●	Yoshi's Cookie ■ Nintendo

mac top 5

1	✪	Rebel Assault ■ LucasArts
2	▼	Myst ■ Electronic Arts
3	✪	Complete Lemmings ■ Psygnosis
4	✪	Theme Park ■ Bullfrog
5	●	Sim City 2000 ■ Maxis

pc top 5

1	✪	Ecstatica ■ Psygnosis
2	✪	Transport Tycoon ■ MicroProse
3	✪	Under A Killing Moon ■ US Gold
4	▼	Doom 2 ■ Virgin
5	✪	Inferno ■ Ocean

md top 5

1	✪	Fifa '95 ■ Electronic Arts
2	✪	PGA Golf 3 ■ Electronic Arts
3	✪	Micro Machines 2 ■ Codemasters
4	✪	Earthworm jim ■ Virgin
5	✪	The Lion King ■ Virgin

mcd top 5

1	▲	Fifa Int Soccer ■ EA
2	▲	Mortal Kombat ■ Acclaim
3	▼	Jurassic Park ■ Sega
4	▼	Tomcat Alley ■ Sega
5	●	Batlecorps ■ Sega

ms top 5

1	✪	Lion King ■ Virgin
2	▼	Mortal Kombat 2 ■ Acclaim
3	▼	Sensi Soccer ■ Sony
4	▼	Sonic Chaos ■ Sega
5	▼	Desert Strike ■ EA

gg top 5

1	●	Mortal Kombat 2 ■ Acclaim
2	✪	The Lion King ■ Virgin
3	▼	Sonic Spinball ■ Sega
4	✪	Dynamite Heddy ■ Sega
5	▼	NBA Jam ■ Acclaim

amiga top 5

1	✪	Tower Assault ■ Team 17
2	✪	Football Glory ■ Black Legend
3	✪	Premier Manager 3 ■ Gremlin
4	✪	Guardian ■ Acid Software
5	✪	Rise Of The Robots ■ Time Warner

3do top 5

1	✪	Fifa Soccer ■ EA
2	▼	Road Rash ■ EA
3	▼	John Madden ■ EA
4	●	Shock Wave ■ EA
5	▼	Night Trap ■ Virgin

cvg's top 5

1	✪	Virtua Fighter ■ Saturn
2	✪	Need For Speed ■ 3DO
3	✪	Magic Carpet ■ PC
4	✪	Bomberman 2 ■ SNES
5	✪	Virtua Fighter 2 ■ Arcade

CHEAT MODE

Now we used to call our tips section CheatMode, but we've been deliberating over renaming our Tips pages, coming up with the likes of We've Got Big Tips; Pie, Mash and Tips; The Cheatah (you know, like the animal); Tips Section (that was Tom's) and CheekBones – which was Tom mishearing what we actually called our cheat pages...

CD-I

7TH GUEST

This isn't the most useful cheat in the world, but here goes anyway. Start a new game and save it under the name BADGER. Then move the pointer to any corner of the screen and press an action button to see a montage of shots from every room.

3DO

WAY OF THE WARRIOR

To play the bosses and activate a completely original stage, go to the 'names' option and enter the following:

Kull The Despoiler: A GAVIN JUN 11 1970
High Abbot: J RUBIN JAN 6 1970

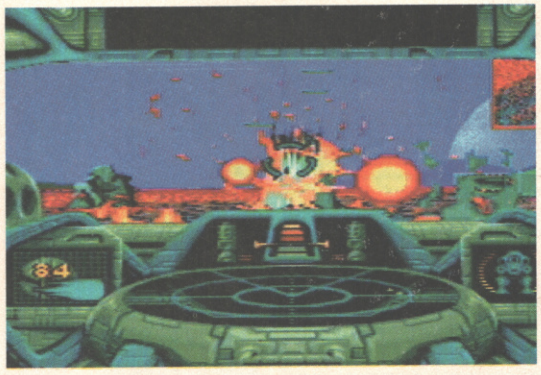
Then scroll down the character-select screen to find them.

For the special stage enter: PARANOID MAY 5 1975

MEGA-CD

BATTLECORPS

For a stage select start a practice level and pause the game. Now press B, A, B, A, RIGHT, A, C, UP and START. The screen should now flash. Pause the game again and press A, B and C simultaneously and the game will reset. You should now be able to select your starting stage by pressing up and down on the character select screen.



SNES

SUPER BOMBER MAN 2

Enter your password as 1111 to start a one-player game with six flames, six bombs, a glove and a detonator.

Power Rangers Codes? We've got 'em!

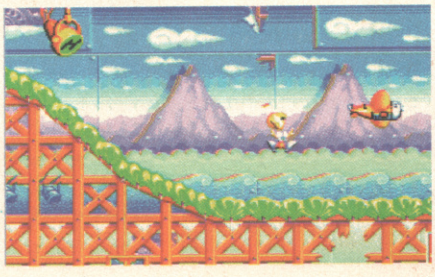
Level two: 3847
Level three: 5113
Level four: 3904
Level five: 1970
Level six: 8624
Level seven: 2596

Two Player:
Scorpina: 0411
Colossus: 1007
Colossus 2: 1212

MEGA DRIVE

DYNAMITE HEADDY

On the title screen press START once. Leave the cursor over the start game option and press C, A, LEFT, RIGHT and B. You should hear a sound which means the level select has been activated. Press START and you'll now be able to choose your starting level.



SNES

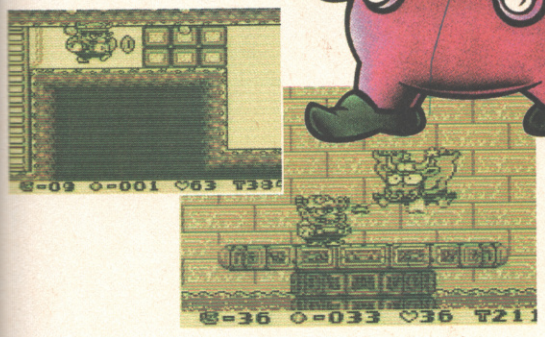
MORTAL KOMBAT II

For an all-new intro, turn the game on and straight away hold down down the L and R buttons on pad one. Kintaro and Shao Kahn should meander on to the screen and decimate the Acclaim logo.

GAME BOY

WARIOLAND

Pause the game at any point and press SELECT 16 times. A box should appear around the last number in your lives counter. Now hold down A and B then use LEFT and UP to move the box and up the number in it respectively. This should let you set everything to nines – giving you everything.



3DO

THE HORDE

It's tricky, it's taxing but it's jolly good fun. Here are a few tips on how to make some extra cash out of your cows.

Always place your cows at least two squares apart otherwise they'll end up turning the land to rubble. Also, place a bomb, or knight, next to a slab of meat, which should attract the Hordlings straight away, leaving you more time to deal with any stragglers.

During the building sequence before the last winter of a level, dig up any trees, cows, knights and other objects then cash them in for crowns as you won't be able to take them with you to the next level.

One of the most powerful weapons that you'll find in your arsenal is the flute. When used in conjunction with the morning star, it attracts Hordlings straight to it. You can also use the music to lead them to a watery grave in nearby lakes and rivers.

GAME BOY

MEGAMAN 5

When the Game Over message has been and gone, press B to continue, then die twice more at the same stage. On your third continue you'll appear in Dr Light's lab and he'll give you a completely new weapon. Do the same again and he'll give you an improved version.

MEGA DRIVE

URBAN STRIKE

To play the secret Mexican level enter your code on the campaign menu as 9NHLGBW6SYL.

IT'S THE BIG TIP

PC

COLONIZATION

Here's something the founding fathers never cottoned on to. Back up the Colonization exec file then make the following changes with a hex editor to the file you'll be running.

0008E8 Change to FF
0008E9 Change to FF
0008EA Change to FF

Now we think you'll find you start the game with a fat pile of cash.

However, if you'd rather play fair, here are a few pointers to get you through the early years of the game.

Always try and establish your colony so that it's close to water and at least one resource that isn't too close to an Indian village. Build it with the soldier, since you won't be attacked in the early stages, and use the pioneer to clear some land for crop growing.

It's imperative that you obtain a scout early on so he can track down all the treasure discs in the game. However, searching a burial mound that's close to an indian village is liable to start a war.

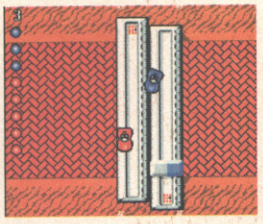
Meanwhile, back at the colony, aim to build rescource-multiplying buildings such as lumber mills and a blacksmith's shop as soon as possible. Don't forget to send goods back to Europe to trade. It helps if you send a ship with a full cargo since each time the same goods turn up on the continent the price dips.

Don't worry about defending yourself to begin with. It's only when you start expanding that you'll come under attack from nervous Indians and other Europeans. By this time you should have a magazine and a gunsmith working away in one of your colonies. And remember to link all your colonies by roads so you can transport men and goods easily.

GAME GEAR

CODEMASTERS GAMES

Here's a throwaway tip that works on most Codemasters Game Gear titles. Hold down 1, 2 and START when you switch the machine on and you'll get a screen with a smiling yellow ball. And that's it, really.



YES! WE WANT YOUR CHEATS AND TIPS!

Now if you're the kind of adept, or even adroit, gamesplayer who is usually the first to discover something secret in a game; or you just want to tell the world about a hint or cheat on your current fave game, then send it in to CVG, 30-32 Farringdon Lane, London EC1R 3AU. We thank you.

HELP!

If you've a problem with school, college, work or unsightly skin diseases – clear off, we don't want to hear about it. Games and hardware-related queries, however, should be sent to Help!, CVG, PRIORY COURT, 30-32 FARRINGDON LANE, LONDON EC1R 3AU. Sorry but we can't reply personally. We're too lazy.

WHY'S IT TAKE SO LONG?

CVG,
Having just purchased a Panasonic 3DO I have a couple of questions –
1 Could you explain to me why release dates for most 3DO Electronic Arts titles are always delayed ie FIFA, Theme Park?
2 Is it worth purchasing the FMV add-on for the 3DO, when Bulldog has MPEG as standard?
3 When would it be likely for us to see Star Trek – The Next Generation on the 3DO?
4 What about PGA 3DO or NHL 3DO?
That's it thanks,
P Gibson, Romford, Essex.

▲ *FIFA on 3DO slipped down the release schedule but it is better for it.*

CVG: Hey – great manners you've got there P. Perhaps, in fact, you could remember the P word a little more often, eh? We've got better things to do than deal with rude people you know. Actually, we haven't, so here's the answers you want. 1 Have you ever tried cleaning up your room or something and thought "Ah, it'll only take a minute" and you're still there three days later? Well that's what writing games is like. 2 Depends on how much you like FMV, really, and also how much money you have. Yes if you can afford it. 3 Technically, the Jaguar is a more powerful machine, but we'd place them neck-and-neck in overall terms at present. Wait till after Chrimble. 4 What about 'em, pal?

SO, TELL ME THIS HERE

Dear Help,
Here are some questions:
1 I've heard that there is going to be a Mortal Kombat 3, but it is only going to be on the SNES, is this true because I would like to see it on the Amiga?
CVG: Well, word is Nintendo have bought up exclusive console rights to Mortal 3, but the release of the coin-op is still along way away, let alone the home versions, so let's just wait and see what happens, eh?
2 Is there going to be a Bubba 'n' Stix 2?
CVG: No plans as yet, sorry.
3 Is there going to be an extension for the Amiga 500 Plus to give it more memory or turn it into a CD games system?
4 For the Amiga can you get a disk with 10 or more games on it?
CVG: No. Unless you're a filthy pirate.
5 Is there going to be Boogerman on the Amiga?
CVG: If you're very lucky, no.
6 Is Super Streetfighter 2 going to be on the Amiga?
CVG: Oh lord, here we go again.
Cheers,
Adam Walker, Bury St Edmunds, Suffolk

▲ *For more news on Mortal 3 see page 43 onwards.*

ALIEN HYPE

Dear Sirs,
Please can I just say that this is a general enquiry and I have no wish to have it published.

I was looking at issue 156 – November '94 and I saw two things. Firstly, in your news section, you had a small feature on the Alien Trilogy game for the Saturn and it said that it is planned for the 32X as well. Please can you tell me if the 32X version will need a Mega-CD to run it?

Also, in your brilliant review of Alien V Predator on the Jaguar, you said that it could become one of the greatest sci-fi movies this decade and as well as that, in the alien profile, you said that they have a Hollywood contract for a fourth movie. Please could you shed some light on the subject as I am an avid Aliens fan. I would really appreciate it if you could help me out with all of this, and congratulations on your big and brilliant mag.
Richard Taylor, Eastbourne

CVG: This is more like it. What a nice polite young gentleman. We'd be only too happy to answer your questions. Alien Trilogy should be a cartridge-only project, so don't worry about picking up a CD-ROM drive. As for the fourth Alien film, well that's a matter of some conjecture. The last we heard Ripley, Hicks, et al make a staggering reappearance. It turns out Alien 3 was just a bad dream (which is exactly what anyone who saw it wished it was) and they carry on from the end of Aliens. Sounds a bit crap really.

MR TO-THE-POINT

I've got a few questions I need answering.
D Oklejewycz, London
1 I've got the choice of getting a Jaguar or a CD-i. Which would you say is best?
CVG: Jag's probably your best bet for games, but CD-i has the multimedia advantage.
2 I've got a PC and want to get a new game. What's the best out of FIFA Soccer, Theme Park, Sim City 2000 and Doom 2?
CVG: Depends whether you want a sports title, a god game or a shoot-'em up. Go for Doom 2 if you don't have the original, otherwise Sim City 2000 is probably the safest bet.
3 What's the best machine out of the Jaguar, CD-i, Saturn and the Ultra 64?
CVG: You've already asked that. The Ultra 64 isn't even real yet.
4 Will FIFA '95 come out on the Jaguar, CD-i or the PC?
CVG: It'll probably surface on the PC, but I wouldn't hold your breath waiting for the other formats.
5 Is Alien V Predator on the Jag worth getting?
CVG: Yes
6 Does the CD add-on for the Jag play music CDs?
CVG: Yes.

BLIMEY THESE ARE GOOD ONES

Dear CVG,
I am thinking of buying one of the new 32-/64-BIT machines. But before I buy one I would like to ask the experts a few questions. Sorry about all the questions but they have been puzzling me for ages. Thanks for your time.
David Taaffe, Co Louth, Ireland
1 Will the Sony Playstation or Sega Saturn be out over here around Christmas?
CVG: Only in the most import of stylees, I'm afraid.
2 Which is better, the 3DO or the Jaguar?
CVG: As we said earlier in this section, they're on level pegging so far as all-round quality goes right now.
3 When the 64-bit add-on for the 3DO is released will that make it better than the PlayStation or even the Ultra 64 (when it is released)?
CVG: No, no, no, no, no.
4 How many buttons are on the 3DO controller?
CVG: Seven, counting the Play and Stop buttons which some games utilise.
5 Is there a big difference between CDs and cartridges and can technology change that?
CVG: Blimey, that's a good question. Well, CDs are cheaper and can hold more information, but the technology to read them is more expensive and there can be annoying lags when the game loads as you play. Updated CD technology could eliminate this, and a super-chip – made of special alien fibres found on Venus – could possibly be the key to massive storage space on ROM chips which cost virtually nothing and are lighter than air.
6 Do you need an extra bit of hardware to watch FMV clips on games like Road Rash on the 3DO?
CVG: No
7 Do American/Japanese 3DO games work on the PAL version or is it like the SNES – you need a convertor?
CVG: No, and you can't get a convertor because it's a CD console with no cart port for a CDX-type device.
8 Is Total Eclipse on the 3DO any good?
CVG: It's OK, it's not brilliant.
9 Is Cybermorph (Jag) any good?
CVG: No.
10 Are these the only games that come with the machines or can you get different packs?
CVG: These are the only ones as yet, sorry.

I BIN GOOD MORROCAN

Dear CVG,
I beeing yurk good fan yes, no. How you is? I bin Peter, my sister big snot be. I reading magazine yours always in Morroco I thinking guud!
Be Strit Faiter Super Turbo much goooler than Mortal Combat 2 choud sie bou 3DO? Or Mega-CD?
Thank you answering yes. Lif going work goud.
Jean Patrick Boucher, Rabat, Morocco

CVG: Right. Er, you're in luck actually. This month features an in-depth head-to-head Super Turbo V Mortal II special (and if you turn to page 43), so hopefully any information you require will be in there. SSF2TX is not coming out for the Mega-CD, sorry. But thanks for writing anyway.

SO YOU DREAM OF THE 3DO?

OK CVG,
You guys know all there is to know about the 3DO so could you please answer my questions:
Luke Mutlu, Fulham, London

1 Will SNK bring out any other titles on the 3DO apart from Samurai Shodown?
CVG: No-one's said anything yet, but you never can tell. We bet that they could well plump for Art of Fighting 2 (but that is mainly based on a rumour started by us, but it would be a bloody brilliant game don't you think Mr SNK Development Man? We think so). Nevertheless, be sure to read what we think of Sam Shodown on page 66-67.
2 Will Capcom bring out any other titles for the 3DO apart from Super Street Fighter 2 Turbo X?
CVG: Maybe, maybe not. But if it's a review of Street Fighter on 3DO haven't you seen our special piece starting on page 43? What's up, is your name Helen Keller or something?
3 Will there be any more Star Wars games on the 3DO apart from Rebel Assault?
CVG: Dark Forces from LucasArts is a probably going to be a good bet.
4 Will any racing car games come out on the 3DO like Daytona USA and Ridge Racer?
CVG: Read all you want about Need For Speed in this very issue.

Believe us these graphics look even better moving. See pages 94/95 for the full monty.

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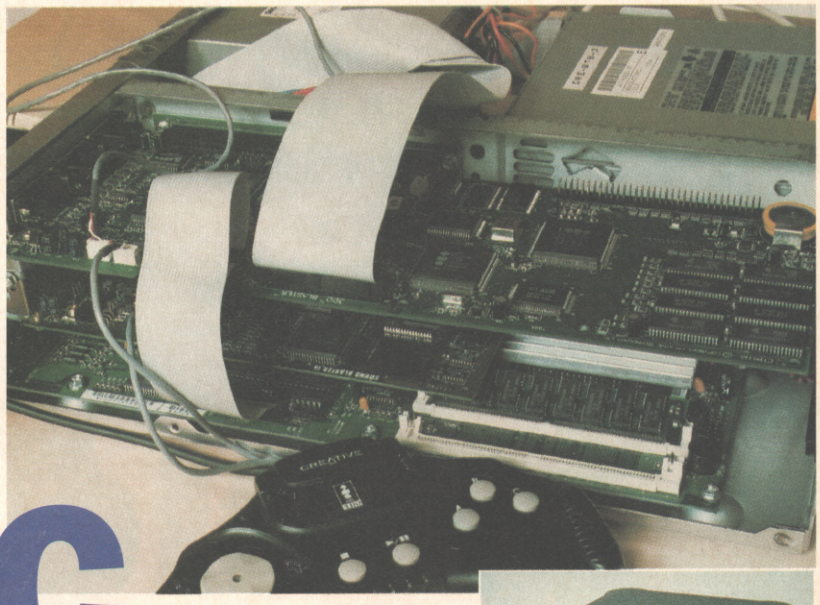
TEKNO

3DO meets PC



So you thought that the chance to play the latest in 3DO games meant yet another matt-black box to sit alongside the TV, video and Mega Drive? Wrong...

Panasonic R•E•A•L 3DO Interactive Multiplayer

▲ *Action games on the PC? Surely not? There is no shortage of software titles on the 3DO, and there are plenty in the pipeline. Way of the Warrior is a fair indication of the style of game you can expect. Fast action, taxing on the reflexes but short in the brains and strategy department.*

3DO has teamed up with multimedia specialist Creative Labs to produce a 3DO card for the PC and it's due out this Christmas. It means, quite simply, that you'll be able to play 3DO games on the PC.

The kit basically consists of the RISC-powered 3DO card itself, the controller – a standard multi-button joypad – and a handful of games titles. This little lot will set you back anything between £250 and £300, and you'll still need a PC with a compatible sound card and a decent CD-ROM drive.

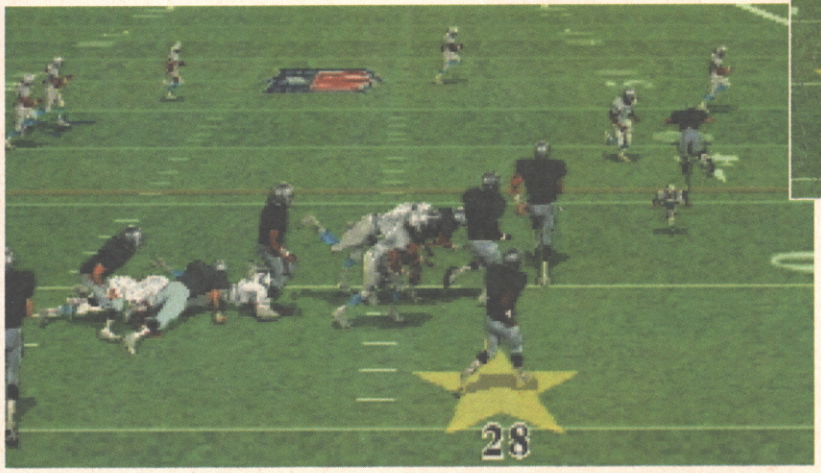
That's not a bad thing though. Any PC gamesplayer worth his or her salt will already have a decent sound card, and this way you get to choose your own CD-ROM drive and with cheap, superfast quad speed CD-ROM drives ready to go on sale this Christmas, that makes plenty of sense.

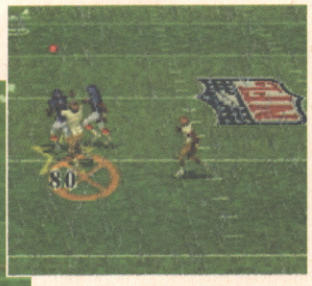
The card is relatively easy to install, which is a rarity where the PC is concerned, and there's no denying the power of the system for shunting along stunning, high-res games and graphics.

Whether you should buy it or not is a matter for you to judge based on the quality of the software. At least it's cheaper than the stand-alone console, although you might have trouble finding a slot for it in one of today's packed machines...

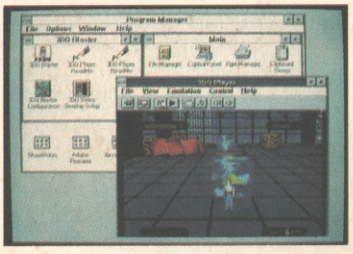
▲ *Sewer Rat a Microcosm-style FMV shoot-'em-up.*

Anything 3DO can do, you can do on the PC. EA's stunning John Madden Football is one of those games that really puts 3DO through its paces. ▼





3DO Roadrash on the PC: looks slick, sounds slick and plays fast. In fact there's no discernible difference in the way it plays if you stick the disc into a PC with a 3DO card or a full-blown 3DO box. ▶



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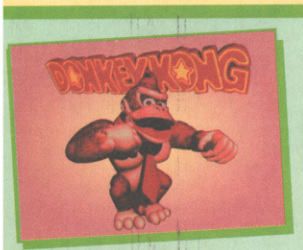
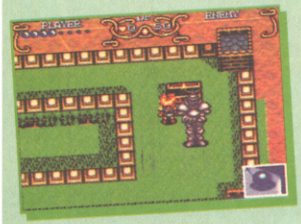


DONKEY KONG COUNTRY CALL

RETURN OF THE JEDI CALL

FINAL FANTASY III CALL



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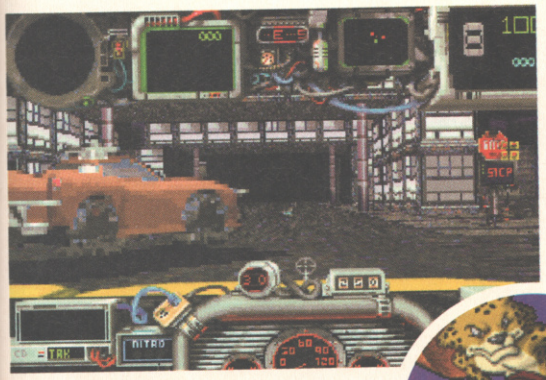
TEKNO

taking the plunge

The new machines are arriving on our shores, and even software companies can't foresee which ones will dominate. We go behind the scenes at Gametek to see how one business is bracing itself against the next big wave...



▲ *One of the backdrops from 32X Brutal – more colour, several extra layers of parallax and smoother scrolling.*

3DO, Saturn, PlayStation, Nintendo Ultra 64? Games players aren't the only ones being buffeted by the maelstrom of new consoles. Predicting which systems will make it big is nigh-on impossible – especially if you're a software house planning to take the plunge and throw millions into development.

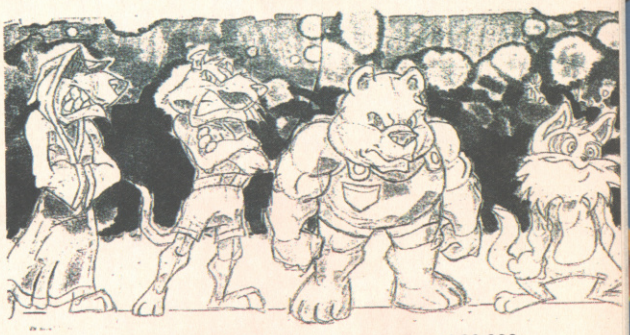
Like many companies at the moment, Gametek, which has predominately operated in the console market, is increasingly moving back into PC. And it's through this machine that companies hope to slip sideways into the new console market without risking their pension funds...

Cross Compatibility

One thing common to the 3DO, Saturn and PlayStation is the way they handle game code. The basics can be produced on PC then ported relatively easily across the different systems. As most music on these machines is read straight from the CD it's the processor speed and graphics hardware which will make the main difference. Apart from letting a softco test the water with a game in the PC market, it also means that games can be produced independent of the console companies who are notoriously unpredictable when it comes to approving games for release. Then there's the royalty fees: $6 from every 3DO game sold goes to the 3DO corporation while the fee for Sega, Sony and Nintendo's machines is reputed to be somewhere in the order of $12-$16.

Looking at the market as a whole, with the Ultra 64 specs just coming to light, it seems as though there are two firm candidates for next year – Saturn and PlayStation. 'Technically the current 3DO doesn't come close to PlayStation, and because of its relatively small user base they'll have a hard time selling the 3DO2 into the home,' says producer Dave Lynch. Bear in mind that these are one person's opinions, and that other companies are more positive about 3DO (Panasonic's new, cheaper 3DO just launched in Japan is expected to ship to the UK, and the Goldstar model, here before next Spring, is allegedly less expensive, too). Currently, however, it's the PlayStation that's the favourite toy of many programmers around the country. When the initial

continued on page 125



▲ *These are the roughs for the characters in Brutal 20,000, after this it's the models then onto an SGI machine.*

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TEKNO taking the plunge

In truth, the 32X's capabilities bring it up to Amiga level for bitmapped graphics.

continued from page 123

development kits were sent out, the PlayStation came in one handy unit, while Saturn updates were appearing every few months as Sega attempted to pre-empt the power of the Sony machine. On paper it certainly seems to be the most powerful, and according to Dave 'it's awesome on 3D.'

As for existing 'official' technology it still has a future, as does the 32X in Dave's opinion, 'the biggest boost it gives to the Mega Drive is colour, but it doesn't offer anything like the power of the Saturn or PlayStation. The biggest problem with it is that you're now able to do more with games but still have the difficulty of fitting them onto a cartridge.' The move against silicon-based storage is the main reason for hardware companies current drive towards CD-based systems.

While compact disc is far from the ideal format – the access times are appallingly slow – it's highly cost-effective. Even on double-speed systems, it costs just over 40p to duplicate a disc – about £12 less than a cartridge. There isn't an easy solution to the speed problem. Increasing the RAM buffer costs money and putting in a quad-speed drive would mean upping the price by around £150.

Brutal Facts

Gametek's first 32-Bit game will be an enhanced version of their 16-Bit cartoon beat-'em-up Brutal. By just improving on the existing game they're able to have one of the first third party games on the system, as the development time for an original 32-Bit product can be anywhere from nine to 18 months. Working on the 32X development kit turned up a few surprises. Firstly that the Mega Drive's 16-Bit processor can be used in tandem with the two 32-Bit ones in the 32X. But once again, the more clever things you try to do, the more memory is taken, the larger the cartridge becomes and the higher the price goes. So Brutal 32X, rather than being a radical departure from the other versions, will be more of an update, a trend we'll be seeing from many software houses. And with the relatively small Mega-CD user base, it doesn't look like

continued on next page

▲ *Quarantine on 32X should be a straight conversion from the PC original.*

Drive your cab through an Escape From New York-style setting. ▶

gateway to hell

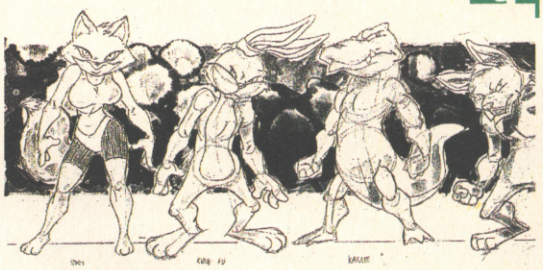
Game's such as Gametek's forthcoming PC CD adventure, Hell, are comparatively easy to convert as the graphics are just streamed video footage and the core of the game is written in C.

The game itself stars Dennis Hopper as – ahem – totally cast against type, a psycho. Grace Jones also makes an appearance, along with the bloke who plays Herman's boss in Herman's Head, which you probably haven't seen, unless you're into staying up watching TV very late on Channel Four.

TEKNO taking the plunge

many publishers will be making the move to CD-based 32X product.

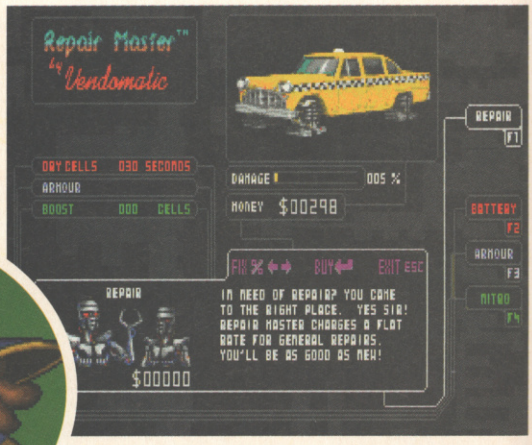
But producing a game for the Saturn is a completely different prospect, with its vastly increased graphic capabilities and faster processors. Brutal 20,000 is currently going into development for the system. Gametek has set aside two Silicon Graphics workstations and a model maker for its development – but whereas in the old days graphics were produced straight from sketches, or originated on computer, now 3D models are required to make sure the images are accurately rendered in the game.



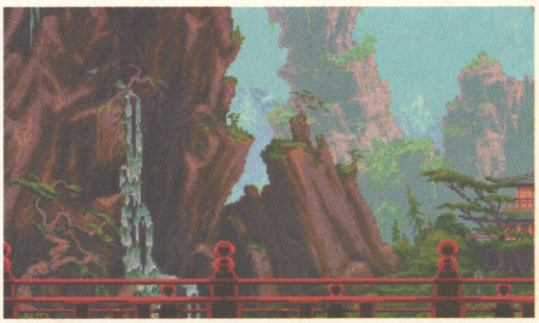
Same Old Story

On the new formats it's likely, in the early stages at least, that most of the games we'll be seeing will be conversions of established coin-ops or 16-Bit titles. At the moment only the big name games are selling strongly, regardless of format, while some very good, original titles have bombed miserably.

Which takes us back to the PC. Produce a game on PC, of which there are more in the home than any other machine, and if it's good a company can shift lots of PC copies and do a 32-Bit console conversion in around five months, without making any risky investments.

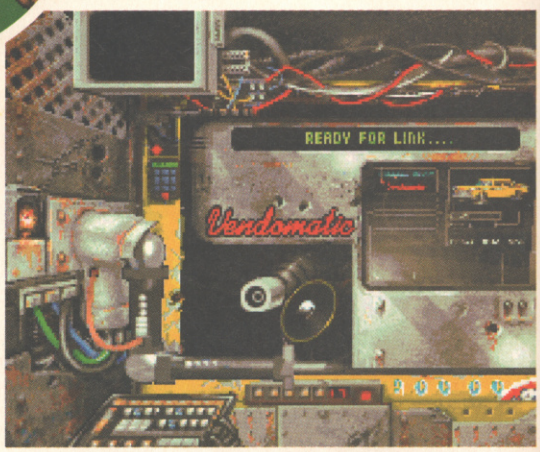


▲ *Quarantine should make a bigger splash on 32X than it did on PC.*



▲ *Brutal 20,000 could be with us before the end of '95.*

With all this power at their disposal it must be tempting for programmers to get caught up in the technology trap and produce great looking products with very little gameplay. 'It's bad practice to look at the hardware and force games to use the new features. You should see what the hardware can do and work towards that,' says Lynch. Let's just hope that's what happen and we're not barraged with the 32-Bit equivalents of Kriss Kross Make My Video.



▲ *3D and texture mapping are all the rage today – with 32-bit processors making it possible.*

taxi driver

With Doom opening the gates to more adult-themed Sega games, Gametek is currently working on a conversion of its PC hit, Quarantine. Even if it would have been technically possible, chances are that a couple of years ago consumer-sensitive Sega wouldn't have approved a game where you, as the world's most dangerous cabbie, spend as much time running over passengers as picking them up – and customers get up to all sorts of unsavoury things in the back seat!

It looks as though Sega's new-found acceptance of 'mature' titles has come as a direct result of the price of hardware. There aren't many younger games players who can get their parents to shell out for a Mega Drive (£90) and 32X (£149.99) and a game for it (£59.99). So there's a much greater chance of adults buying the system, or that dad wants to get his own back on junior by hogging the machine he spent his hard-earned cash on.

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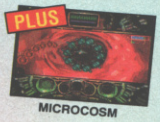
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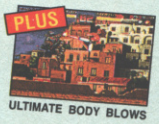
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It's a bit of an event, this. In fact it's a gert big 'un... Sega has launched a brand spanking new console – smart it is, too. We've got one of these great new machines to give away! It's yours – for a stamp and a postcard!

INE FUTURE NOW!

Imagineer, the publisher of **Kick Off 3**, has dug deep into the linings of its transglobal pockets to shell out the sovs for this wonderful prize. It could quite easily be yours: just answer the question correctly, and if you're first out of the hat with the right reply it's yours. Twenty runners-up will each get a **Kick Off 3 T-shirt.**

AND THE QUESTION IS...

Who were last team to do the footy double?

Answers on a postcard or a sealed envelope to First with the Saturn compo, Computer and Video Games, EMAP Images, Priory Court, 30-32 Farringdon Lane EC1R 3AU. Entries in by 30th January 1995, please.

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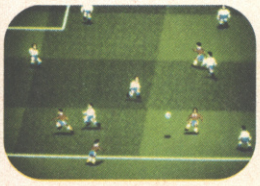
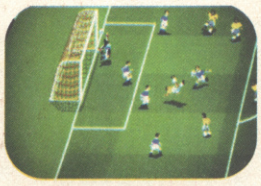




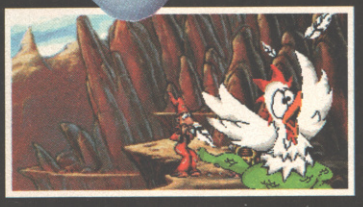
NEXT MONTH

DEFINITIVE FIRST REVIEW

THE PLAYSTATION ARRIVES!

Will the first game for the Sony PlayStation be just as good as the first one for the Saturn? After bringing you the very first review of Virtua Fighter, next month we'll be turning our attention to the debut releases for the Sony PlayStation – as it finally hits our shores....

disc world



One of the most eagerly awaited games in years get the big yay or nay from CVG...

international super star soccer

Check out what's possibly the best footy game ever as International Super Star Soccer gets the full CVG review....

DEATH on the net

Internet types – don't you just love 'em? Well if not you'll love the next issue, where we show you how to kill them! It's all in, like, virtual reality, though....

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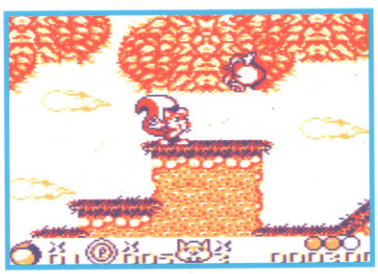
The temperature's dropping but the heat is most definitely on.



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